MENNONITE LIFE

October, 1947

Published in the interest
of the best
in the religious, social, and economic phases
of Mennonite culture

To Our Readers

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MENNONITE LIFE

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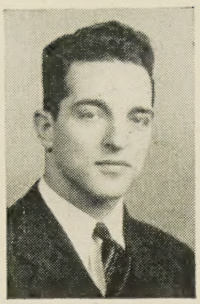
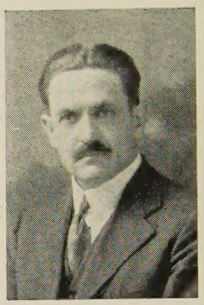
Contributors in this Issue

(From left to right)





J. HERBERT FRETZ, pastor of the Deep Run Mennonite Church, is a graduate of Bluffton College and Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia. He is assisting in a research project for the history of the Eastern District Conference.

LESTER HOSTETLER, pastor of the Bethel College Church, has served as pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Upland, California. He is also a horticulturist who enjoys spending some time in his orchard at Sugarcreek, Ohio.

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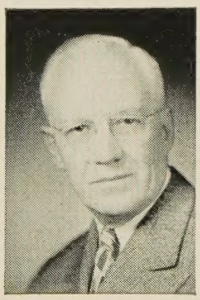
G. BAERG, professor of German at De Pauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, received his education in the schools of Hillsboro, Kansas, and did graduate work at Paris and Berlin. He has travelled extensively on the continent.



CORNELIUS J. CLAASSEN is a grandson of the Consul Cornelius Jansen, mentioned in the article. He is founder and president of Farmers National Company, Omaha, Nebraska, a company devoted to the management of farms of absentee owners.

ARNOLD B. DYCK, writer, artist, and publisher, of Steinbach, Manitoba, is secretary of the *Echo-Verlag*, a Mennonite publishing enterprise. He is a regular contributor to *Mennonite Life*.

ALBERTA PANTLE grew up in Marion County, Kansas. She is author of a historical study entitled "Settlement of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren at Gnadenau, Marion County," published in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly*. Miss Pantle is a member of the staff of the Kansas State Historical Society Library.

WALTER GERING, pastor of the Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kansas, gave a year's service to the Mennonite Central Committee in ministering to the displaced Prussian Mennonites now in Denmark.

JOHN F. SCHMIDT has joined the staff of Bethel College as assistant to Dr. C. Krahn in research in the historical library and as literary editor of *Mennonite Life*. He has held several pastorates and has served as camp director in Civilian Public Service camp.

NOT SHOWN

PAUL R. SHELLY, head off the Bible department of Bluffton College and chairman of the Curriculum Committee of the General Conference, has done graduate work at Hartford Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, and Teachers College, New York.

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RICHARD H. SCHMIDT is a farmer of the Goessel, (Kansas) community whose early hobby, taxidermy, has become a profession. The author uses a portable collection of mounted birds to illustrate his lecture to groups in churches, camps, and schools (For picture see p. 17).

REUBEN FANDERS grew up in the Diller community, Nebraska. Practices described in "I Remember Butchering" could be duplicated with slight variations of any rural community of America with a German background. The author is a teacher and photographer (See picture p. 25).

EDWIN L. WEAVER teaches English at Kletzing College, University Park, Iowa. He taught for a number of years at the Gretna Collegiate Institute, located in the heart of the Mennonite settlement in Manitoba (For picture see p. 9).

MR. AND MRS. WALDO HIEBERT have taught in the *Zentralschule*, Fernheim, Paraguay, for two and a half years as representatives of the Mennonite Central Committee. Prior to this they both taught at Tabor College, where Mr. Hiebert has again resumed teaching. (See pictures on pp. 28-29).

OTHER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Citrograph," photography, pp. 4-7. Robert Kreider, photography, p. 11. Randolph Penner, drawing, pp. 15, 23 and 38. Mary Lou Rich, drawing, p. 20. *The American-German Review*, cuts, "Gnadenau Village Plan," and clock, pp. 20-21. Reuben Fanders, photography, pp. 24-25. J. Herbert Fretz, map and photography, pp. 33-37.

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O Give Thanks Unto the Lord

BY JOHN F. SCHMIDT

MANY of our churches have developed the custom observing harvest- and thank-festivals. Agrarian people find it easy to follow the custom of he Israelites in thus setting aside a season in which to hank God for the yield of garden and field. Even our ational day of Thanksgiving first took root in the rural nvironment. Giving thanks for the fruit of the earth is ertainly a wholesome expression of our dependence upon od. We gather in our houses of worship and share our naterial blessings with others so that they may know a etter life and with us sing songs of praise to God.

Jesus found many people who forgot to express their ratitude. Such people may have failed to cultivate a ense of value. We need to have an experience of seeing he real worth of an idea, an activity, or of a scene in nature as these may be contrasted to more specifically material values. To have a real sense of thankfulness we nust be able to discriminate between the temporal and he abiding, between those values that minister to our odily needs only and those values that enrich the life of he spirit.

Readers of *Mennonite Life* will find many illustrations of deeds and of ideals that warm the heart and ive us stature and dignity, as children of God. From he time of the founding of our fellowship even until now our heritage is rich with stories of heroism and unswerving devotion to great ideals. Often our people have echoed he words of the Pilgrims: "It is not with us as with ther men; whom small things can discourage, and small isappointments cause to wish themselves at home again."

Many of our Brotherhood have gone from the stage f this world and have taken the story of their heroism vith them. We are reminded of the words of the explorer Scott, who, as he lay dying on his homeward narch from the North Pole, wrote in his diary: "Had we ived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood nd courage of my companions which would have stirred he heart of every Englishman."

The realization that we are all children of sacrifice rompts us to give thanks. In our meditative moments ve realize that the great values in our church and community life are the fruit of sacrifice beyond our ability o repay. Someone has had to see a responsibility and be repared to pay the cost of discharging such a responibility, even to the extent of forfeiting his own life. We ook to the past and give thanks for the self-denial that as elevated us and caused us to care for the values of he Kingdom.

Not only are we stirred to a feeling of gratitude by he courage and sacrifice of our fellowmen, but God's vorld of beauty also awakens in us the spirit of thankulness. The beauty of nature may seem commonplace at times, but Elizabeth Barrett Browning reminds us that even the commonplace should never be taken for granted.

"Earth's crowned with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God,
And only he who sees takes off his shoes—
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."

The late Lorado Taft tells how, during a summer spent in France, he was painting one evening a gorgeous Bretagne sunset. A French girl, who was helping his wife in the house, crept up behind him and viewed his canvass. She was delighted with the sunset as he was finding it in the paints of his palette, and she made this extraordinary request: "Mr. Taft, may I leave the house long enough to go over to my home on the next hill to tell my mother and father to go out and see the sunset?" And Mr. Taft said, "Can they not see it from where they are? Will they not see it without your telling them?" The French girl answered, "Oh, no. They have lived there all their lives, but I don't believe they have really seen a sunset."

Again, we grow in our sense of appreciation by realizing the fellowship we have with those who cherish the ideals we hold dear and who work for goals for which we, too, have labored. Paul, on his journey to Rome, came to Appii Forum and was there greeted by a group of Christians from Rome. The record tells us that "when Paul saw them he thanked God and took courage." It was as though old friends met him on the way to his trial and gave him courage to continue his witness to the end.

When Mennonites meet other members of their Fellowship they know that they possess much that is common in their heritage and profess a like devotion to Christian principles. Thus, in spite of their differing backgrounds or nationalities, they are at once conscious of a warm fellowship. Of late years Mennonites from all parts of the world have, upon seeing others of their persuasion, thanked God and taken renewed courage for the tasks and trials to come. Non-Mennonites, too, have had occasion to thank God for the fellowship they enjoy with us. A recipient of Mennonite aid in Germany writes: ". . . . it is not only the blankets themselves that make us happy, much more the knowledge of having friends, not only in Germany, but even in the far-away States, a country which was our enemy during the war."

Let us, then, be thankful to God for the aspirations He has given us, for the desire to live free from the tyranny of men and the slavery of sin: let us thank Him for the beauty of the world about us, for the revelation of His love which comes to us in our experiences of fellowship, and, above all, for the unfinished tasks before us.

THE CITRUS FRUIT INDU

E

GEOGRAPHICALLY considered, California is one of the most extraordinary of the forty-eight states in the Union. Really there are several Californias. There is Central California, Northern California, and Southern California. There is the California that is mountainous, the California that is desert, the California of the beaches, and the California of the Imperial Valley.

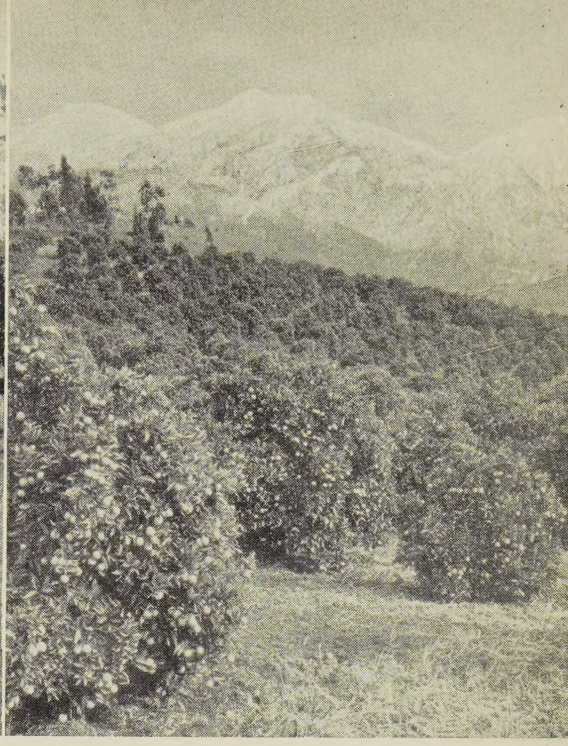
It is in Southern California that the citrus industry flourishes. Some citrus is grown in the San Joaquin Valley, but this comprises only a small portion of the total produced by the State. Southern California is one of the smallest geographical regions in America. It is a coastal strip about two hundred and seventy-five miles long, and from one to fifty miles in depth. It is walled in from the desert by the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains on the east and by the Tehachapi range on the north. These mountains are high enough to keep out the heat of the desert on the one hand, and to become a barrier to the ocean winds on the other thus causing them to form clouds and deposit their moisture upon a dry and thirsty land.

But it is the climate of Southern California, a climate produced by a combination of ocean breezes and mountain ranges, of semi-desert and snow-capped peaks, which gives this region its peculiar charm and makes possible the citrus industry. The climate alone, however, does not grow orange trees and the tourist who sees the deep green of the orange groves fails to realize how dependent upon water this area is.

Water may perform miracles. The miracle that is Southern California is almost literally wrought by water. The mountain snow and the valley rains form the streams and wells in the valley which irrigate the vast citrus orchards, sprinkle the acres of lawns, and supply homes and industry with abundant water. Well spoke Theodore Van Dyke when he said, "Rain—the sweetest music to the California ear." Local rains and snows are not enough. In its eternal quest for water Southern California has tapped the Colorado River bringing in its water through an aqueduct 242 miles in length.

The stately orange trees in their dark green dignity are deceptive in yet another way. Little do they say of the painful toil expended to win this land from its original desert estate. Land had to be cleared—great rock walls, miles long, fifteen to twenty-five feet high and equally wide, hidden from the highways by the forests of trees—these are the reminders of arduous, back-breaking labor. Nor do these beautiful trees indicate the constant application of work entailed in the almost ceaseless irrigation, pruning, and cultivation, to say nothing of the spraying, the fumigating, and the smudging. (Smudging is a term which describes the artificial heating of the orchards in the winter months to save fruit and even the trees themselves from severe frosts.)

Today an orange grove in Southern California represents an investment of $1,500—$3,000 an acre. Recently a 10-acre lemon grove was reported to have been sold at $60,000. It requires men of no mean ability to bring



OUTHERN CALIFORNIA

grove into production and operate it, once it has been stablished. These men must be at one and the same ime horticulturalists and soil engineers, businessmen nd biologists. There are few very large ranches of sev- ral hundred or even a thousand acres of land. The av- rage grove is small in size, usually comprising ten to wenty acres. The grower with access to uniformly good, ard-surfaced roads, electricity, telephone, and excellent chools enjoys every convenience associated with urban ving. The beautiful homes one sees throughout the Orange Empire" are practically suburban residences.

The generic term "citrus" includes such trees as range, lemon, lime, and grapefruit. The two leading arieties of oranges are the Washington Navel and the Valencia; the former is a winter fruit while the latter natures during the summer.

"The good earth" of the citrus belt originated, as does he water supply, in the mountains. By means of ero- ion, the decomposed granite of the hills and mountains s deposited in the valleys, the heavier soils first and the ghter, sandy soils last. Thus the nearer one approaches he mountains, the heavier the soil becomes. It is in this eavy soil, composed largely of feldspar, quartz, and imilar substances, that the citrus trees flourish. The mount of clay in the soil increases with the degree of ecomposition of the feldspar and granite. It is the clay which in the last analysis provides the material to feed the tree, for it holds plant food and water so that the feeder roots can get it.

Since the soil is rather heavy with many variations, cultivation is a general practice. Trees are planted in rows which permits cultivation in several directions. For example, a grove may be cultivated north and south, and also east and west, and then as a variation, diagonally, northeast and southwest. Cultivation usually follows each irrigation and must be carefully timed. Considerable experience is necessary to determine the exact time for cultivation as the soil must not be too wet or too dry. Orchards are cultivated to permit aeriation of the soil, to control weeds which compete with the trees for the moisture in the ground, and to produce a fine-textured topsoil which encourages capillary action in bringing moisture to the feeder roots near the surface. However, constant cultivation over a period of years in soils that contain considerable clay tends to produce a "plow-sole." In recent years, therefore, an increasing number of growers are discarding cultivation. Irrigation furrows are drawn and become permanent. Weeds are controlled by frequent application of a thin oil spray. In time such applications become less and less necessary as frequent destruction of plants destroys their ability to reproduce. But it is still too early to determine whether the absence of cultivation adds either to total yield or to improved quality. Yield and quality are the result of all the influences of the environment in which a tree grows: weather, wind, frost (or their absence), and soil fertility.

The soils described require considerable organic matter. This is obtained by the application of barnyard ma-

A spraying scene. Expensive, complicated machinery is required to operate and maintain an orange or lemon grove. Trees are sprayed to control the scale, red spider, and other destructive insects.

Picture below illustrates the process of fumigation which serves similar purposes.

Right—Irrigation of orange grove. Water runs along such furrows for 24 hours every 20 or 30 days.

nure, bean straw, and other vegetable matter which is usually culivated or disced into the soil, and the growing of so-called cover-crops during the rainy months. These cover-crops are generally leguminous plants, such as vetch, which supply the nitrogen the citrus tree requires to produce good fruit in large quantity. The cover-crops are sometimes plowed under, but in recent years it has become common practice to disc them into the soil. Resort is also made to artificial fertilizers and chicken- or rabbit manure. Still, the fertilization of the citrus tree is far from being an exact science. Soil and moisture conditions are so variable that what may benefit one grove will be found detrimental in another.

After the citrus tree has reached maturity—often earlier—pruning becomes necessary. Pruning involves the removal of dead wood, crowded, deformed and diseased limbs, limbs that have been bruised or even broken by reason of wind action or as a consequence of cultivation, and finally, the removal of suckers. A sucker is a limb that grows with extreme rapidity, absorbing moisture and plant food in prodigious amounts to the detriment of normal fruit wood, and producing little or no fruit.

Pruning involves more than stepping up to a tree and whacking off one limb here, and another there. The skillful pruner must know when to cut, what to cut, where to cut, and how to cut. His is an art that requires experience and good judgment. Severe pruning is detrimental to a healthy tree, and will result in lower yield and income. A grower may do his own pruning, but most growers prefer to employ men who have made pruning a profession.

Seldom does one find a grower who does his own spraying and fumigating. These operations are so technical and require such expensive equipment that the great majority of growers prefer to employ the services of specialists. In some areas growers form co-operative organizations to provide themselves with these needed operations.

No survey of the citrus industry, no matter how brief, is complete without a few words concerning the California Fruit Growers Exchange. Most of the entire citrus crop, three-fourths of it in fact, is marketed through the world-wide and highly efficient sales organization of the Exchange. Its "Sunkist" label has become world-famous. The California Fruit Growers Exchange is one of the largest, most efficient, and perhaps the oldest farmers' co-operative marketing association in the United States. There are more than 200 local packing associations, which are organized in 25 district exchanges. The head office of the Exchange is maintained in Los Angeles. It has established a reputation for its standardized and graded fruits.

Local packing houses, through which growers become members of the Exchange, provide the labor to pick and haul the fruit and furnish the containers, called "field boxes" in which the fruit is brought to the packing house. There it is washed, sorted, graded, labeled, packed, and shipped. In fact, it is possible for a grower to arrange with his local packing house to take charge of the pruning, the fumigating, spraying, and even the irrigation and fertilization of his grove.

An interesting plant operated by the Exchange is the by-products plant in Ontario. Here the cull fruit is processed and such products as pectin, orange oil, lemon oil, and orange pulp are manufactured. Oils thus extracted are highly valued for flavoring. The plant maintains its own chemical research laboratory for the purpose of discovering new products and new uses for cull fruit. The latest of such products are tablets containing Vitamin P.

Climate, land, and geography form a biological factory which man is using for the production of what has been called "The Aristocrat of Fruits." No matter how hard man may labor, no matter how developed his technological processes become, it still remains true that "only God can make a tree."

A familiar scene in a lemon house of the California Fruit Growers Exchange.

Below—Picking lemons. Fruit which will not go through the ring is clipped and sent to the packing house.

Left—A cultivation scene. Shown here is a disc-like machine. There are also several kinds of spring-tooth harrows, and many types of cultivators. Cultivation generally follows irrigation.

MENNONITE CITRUS FRUIT GROWERS

BY LESTER HOSTETLER

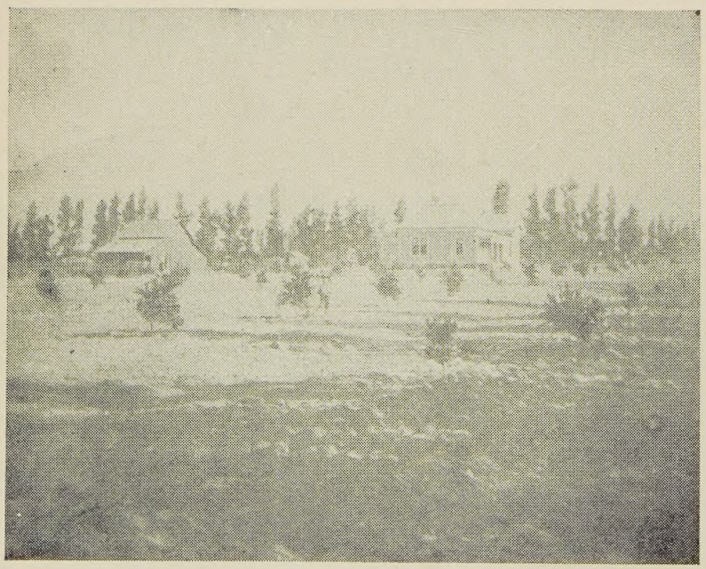
THE First Mennonite Church of Upland, California, has its economic roots deep in the citrus industry of Southern California. Located forty miles east of Los Angeles, in the heart of the lemon- and orange-growing section, its membership of nearly four hundred people is to a large extent dependent, directly or indirectly, upon the citrus fruit industry.

In 1935 the Jubilee Session of the General Conference of Mennonites was held in this church. There were many important questions discussed and some eloquent addresses were delivered. If these have by now passed into the limbo of forgetfulness, it is certain that the delegates and vistors have not forgotten the ice-cold orange juice that was served free-of-charge, in unlimited quantity, to any and all who would drink it. Oranges were trucked from groves and packing houses near by, the gift of a number of growers in the church. That barrel of juice, like the widow's cruise of oil, maintained a steady supply through the hot conference days.

In the background of that barrel lies the long story of citrus culture in the community. The early Mennonite settlers came from Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, and other states. Most of them were farmers with no previous experience with fruit. For reasons of health many of them migrated here in the hope that the milder climate and the much-advertised sunshine would prove beneficial. They left behind them their grain and stock farms in the East to venture into a new type of agriculture.

Some of the best groves in the whole section, now fifty and more years old, were planted by Mennonites. These early settlers grew up with the industry. They helped develop the water resources for irrigation, learned how to cultivate and care for their trees, and in the meantime support themselves and their families. The first years were full of struggle and hardship. There was land to be paid for and trees to be set out which would not bear for a number of years. Farmers always live on faith and hope; none more so than those who make their living from trees. By hard work and careful management, these early settlers were able to make ends meet; and when their trees came into bearing, they made a good living and more. Some of them became wealthy.

In the meantime, these pioneers maintained their interest in the church. At first they met in private homes and improvised buildings for Sunday school and worship services. Then, in 1903, a church was organized with eighteen charter members. Today, on Campus Avenue, is to be found one of the finest churches in the denomination, well equipped for Sunday school work, and an active organization doing a wonderful work in the community. A beautiful pipe organ was installed in 1935, the



The late Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Ledig, 1905, pioneer citrus fruit growers and active members of the Upland Mennonite Church.

Left—The L. M. Ledig "ranch" in 1899. Note the size of the trees in the foreground. Years of nurture and patience are required to bring a citrus tree to maturity.

gift of a pioneer couple, as a thank-offering for God's goodness during their many years of citrus culture.

The early Mennonite settlers in Upland were more than farmers and tenders of trees. They were Christians and church members. They remembered God's tender mercies and relied on His abundant loving-kindness. Mennonite life was and is physically nurtured here by a particular and unique industry. But its spiritual sustenance came from the source of all blessings everywhere —God, our eternal Strength and Refuge.

First Mennonite Church, Upland, California.

A Modern Pilgrim's Thanksgiving

BY EDWIN L. WEAVER

THE first Sunday morning in October, 1926, was cold and comfortless in southern Manitoba. Through a dull sky the disgruntled northwest wind was pushing along trains of dark clouds. The earth had already put on some of her variegated autumnal garb, but her green summer dress had not yet been entirely discarded. In every village the trees clung tenaciously to their leaf-children who were slipping away from their mother's clutch and fluttering through the air at every possible chance. Nature's appearance in general indicated that summer was swiftly receding, winter fast approaching, and that the fruits of the harvest were almost all garnered.

The out-of-doors appeared more gloomy than usual, but the faces of nearly everybody in Rosenort and surrounding villages radiated a joy that removed many traces of former sorrows.

Sorrows? Yes, indeed! These people knew hardships and bitter sorrows well, for they had experienced the terrors of the Russian Revolution. But now they were safe in Canada and had already produced the first season's crop. They were all filled with joy since this was the day when, according to previous arrangements, they were to meet in the old church in the center of the village to manifest their gratitude to the God of the harvest.

Rosenort, one of numerous villages, in the Mennonite Reserve section of the Red River valley in Manitoba, is a typical village with its very wide, tree-lined street and houses surrounded by trees on either side. The church and school are near the center of this mile-long village. Any newcomer to the Reserve may station himself at any point on these treeless plains and looking in all directions see clumps of trees which he soon learns to detect as villages. The farmers with their families live in these villages, while their farmlands lie in the nearby districts. The plan is similar to that of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England.

People from the various surrounding villages are on the way to Rosenort this October Sunday morning. Some come in farm wagons, others in topless carriages, and only a very few in automobiles. They arrive early at the church, an unpainted, weatherbeaten, barn-like structure, which has stood the storms of many winters. The spacious churchgrounds round about the building already hold many of these inelegant vehicles. Their number indicates that many people are within, although a few men still stand about engaged in conversation.

As we approach, a broad-shouldered, black-bearded man with sharp eyes and bold countenance greets us with a word of welcome. He is one of a number of ministers attending the special services of the day. Without delay we enter to find nearly every seat occupied but succeed in finding a vacant place on one of the front benches. These benches, substantially built, unpainted, and many without backs, aid the worshippers to remain awake during the service. The pulpit on the side of the church is long, narrow, and considerably elevated. A wooden bench along the wall seats at least a dozen serious men—young, middle-aged, and old. A rich collection of the fruits of the harvest is heaped upon the platform.

What a contrast between the service of these poor pilgrims and the Thanksgiving Day observance of the average American! It is no hallucination for these are as truly pilgrims as were those who came in the Mayflower. They are as sincere and probably as brave as were those of the early colonial days.

Shortly after our entrance a minister, whose gray hair show years of experience, opens a large Martin Luther translation of the sacred Scriptures, reads a portion suitable to the occasion, and leads the congregation in prayer. A group of young people under the direction of a leader sing a Thanksgiving chorus. They are not dressed in dazzling or fashionable attire, but in inexpensive garments, some of which had been given to them by friends in the United States. They sing in a simple manner with genuine feeling, although probably lacking in some artistic touches.

After the concluding chorus number, a tall elderly man of stern appearance rises. Despite his apparent austerity, tenderness beams from his eyes and reveals a loving heart. He is the speaker of the occasion. Though his words are not as fluent and sonorous as those of an orator, they are nevertheless spoken with a deep-toned, somewhat husky voice and in a positive manner. They come from a man deeply sincere and gentle. After repeating his text, *Der Herr hat an uns gedacht,* he recalls the sad experience of recent years in Russia, but exults in the fact that the merciful Father in heaven has not forgotten His people.

In this assembly of pilgrims are those who had known the enjoyments of wealth. They had beautiful homes, churches, and schools in the land they loved—southern Russia. There, along the Chortitza and Molotschna rivers and adjacent regions, they had passed their happy childhood years, and this was the land of their future aspirations. But, alas, things suddenly changed. The first World War came along, and in the midst of it a terrible revolution broke out. The rich became poor, terror reigned, and everything was upside down in Russia. People were watched and spied upon by Bolsheviki and could hardly move without government permission.

In a small peaceful village, a family has gone to bed. In the darkness of night, there is suddenly a loud knocking at the door of the house. The husband and wife, both very pale, get up at once. "We must search the house," says one of the soldiers standing in the doorway. They enter, rummage the whole house, open drawers in the dressing table, and fill their pockets with its contents. The soldiers carry guns and any refusal to let them take what they want would mean death. Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* gives a good picture of what life is during a revolution.

These modern pilgrims, worshiping God in this Mennonite church in the village of Rosenort, Manitoba, have passed through the terrors of the revolution. Maidens and young men have seen brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers die from disease or starvation or shot to death on the streets by the Bolsheviki. Children could not be brought up in the old familiar manner for Christian training was forbidden in the schools. They were to have a Thanksgiving without God. But what would Thanksgiving be without God? They decided to come to the New World where they could worship God as they had been accustomed to do in southern Russia.

Truehearted and brave, they give the last, sad farewell to their friends who remain behind. They look once more at the homes of their childhood, and for the last time cross the threshold over which they had gone in and out so many times before. Here lie the beautiful, peaceful villages with their tree-lined streets, spacious houses, pleasant gardens, and splendid schools and churches. With little money, but with confidence in God, they turn their faces westward toward a land of promise.

Arriving in Canada, some of them take possession of homes vacated by Mennonites who have gone to Mexico. The colonial pilgrims had to live in the Mayflower several months during the first winter, and more than half of the colony was destroyed by disease. Our modern pilgrims are more fortunate. They have, however, no Squanto or Massasoit to bring deer for a Thanksgiving festival. At noon they go into some of the homes adjoining the church and taking their simple food out of baskets, place it on long tables and partake of it. There is no social affectation or hilarity.

As the evening draws near, these pilgrims leave the humble church and begin their homeward journey. The cloudiness of the morning has increased and now as the twilight fades away rain is steadily falling. The horses plod along over the coal-black Red River soil which has become as slippery as soap. The darkness of night envelopes the earth before many of our pilgrim friends from other villages reach their homes. They reflect on the experiences of the day and the goodness of God. Before them lies the dim and unknown future in a new world of toil and struggle but with the freedom they longed for. They are convinced in their hearts that the words of the preacher and of the Psalmist are true; *Der Herr hat an uns gedacht.*

Modern Pilgrims' Thanksgiving

Right above—After World War I some 25,000 Russian Mennonites, modern pilgrims, came to America. More than 2,000 have already joined them since World War II. Eight thousand more are waiting in Western Europe to join their brethern in a land of freedom. In the picture we see one of the families that has escaped the insecurity of life in the Russian zone and is now being welcomed by a Mennonite refugee leader in Western Germany.
Below—Willingly these youngsters carried their few belongings on their seemingly endless journey, and now they look longingly for a home in a land of freedom.

WITH PRUSSIAN MENNONITES IN DENMARK

BY WALTER GERING

WITH THE close of the recent war we have suddenly developed an interest in Denmark. For over a year a relief unit has been maintained in the country; clothing has been shipped into its harbors, shoes have been purchased and distributions have been made within its borders; religious services have been conducted by Mennonite ministers throughout the land during this period.

The reason for this sudden Mennonite activity in this small nation after centuries of non-interest is apparent: the close of the war found some 1,500 of our brethren-in-the-faith exiled in this land as a people without a country, bereft of all their earthly belongings and in most cases separated from members of the immediate family. With the retreat of the German army in the presence of the onrushing Russian pancers and motored artillery, Danzig, the beautiful homeland of our people for over four hundred years, became a blazing mass of flame. Countless thousands of helpless men, women, and children were herded upon ships by the German army and transported into regions of safety. Great numbers went down into a watery grave in the flight; many leaped from flaming decks into the waters while others were burned to death, unable to escape. A remnant was saved and brought to the shores of Denmark, then an occupied country of the German Reich. The close of the war found this small nation of four million people with over 200,000 homeless, despised people upon its hands. As a nation they found themselves confronted with the problem of housing, feeding, and clothing these refugees.

As a Mennonite Central Committee Unit we found ourselves traveling from camp to camp, administering material aid to our brethren and others as well. Since many of them had brought with them on the flight little more than bare necessities, there was evident a real need for such aid. Clothing from the shipments sent by the Mennonite Central Committee from the States and Canada, as well as shoes purchased in Denmark, were distributed within the camps. Distributions made to our Mennonite brethren were under the supervision of the Mennonite Cenrtal Committee Unit aided by Mennonite refugees within the camps. Aid administered to others was done largely through the organized agencies within the camps.

With the administration of material aid came also opportunities for religious activities. The spiritual life of our Mennonite people was nurtured largely under the direction of a number of ministers who had been actively engaged in the ministry before the flight. Among these were two Elders: Bruno Ewert and Bruno Enns. These, with the help of others, served the group with communion, baptism, and devotional hours. While our people attended the regular camp's services conducted by Lutheran ministers sent by the Danish Lutheran Church agencies, yet they repeatedly expressed their appreciation for a Mennonite service. The Mennonite Central Committee Unit found a hearty welcome among our brethren-in-the-faith and unitedly joined in worship through Bible study-hours and prayer services.

In order that you may get some insight into the life of our people during this period of their internment let us make a brief visit into one of the camps. All who enter the camp must have properly authorized passes, and as we approach we are confronted by the guard who checks on our pass. As we enter, the gate closes behind us, and we are enclosed within barbed-wire fences guarded by regularly pacing watchmen. In the camp office we meet the camp leader, who receives us. We explain our mission, and he grants us permission to make our calls. Today we are interested in visiting some of our Mennonite brethren. In our pocket we have a list of the Mennonites who are in this particular camp. Numerous boys running up and down the streets are only too eager to help us find the right barrack. In our search we find people everywhere; some of them are hurrying along with a dish in their hand which has just been filled at the camp kitchen and is being taken to the barrack where the family will eat the meal; others are sitting in the shade, visiting or reading some book; still others are slowly walking back and forth dreaming of—well, of what does one dream in a refugee camp?

Here we are at the right barrack, and so we knock at the door and enter. We ask for the good brother whom we seek; some one at the rear of the room responds; slowly he approaches with a look of concern upon his face. Why is he being called out by strangers? But as he realizes who it is, his face breaks forth into a glorious smile, and he grips our hand with a hearty shake —*"die amerikanischen Freunde, wie herrlich!"* We follow him into the back of the room to his little spot in the large room. He is not the only one who lives in this room; sometimes as many as thirty or more live in the same room. Each one has his bed and family table. He welcomes us, and we sit down, some of us on the bed, others on a chair or two which kind fellow-roomers offer to us as guests. The conversation begins to flow rapidly from one topic to another.

Today he is a happy man for the mailman brought good news; one of the sons who had been considered dead (since no word had been received for over a year) has written that he is alive and well. What a happy moment that was when this letter arrived. Not always does the mailman bring such good news. Only yesterday we visited a family where the mailman had brought the

From Danzig to Denmark

When, near the close of the war, the Red Army moved into the Danzig area, more than 10,000 Mennonites fled westward, some of them reaching Denmark.

Homes and farms like these were left behind.

Mennonite Church of Tiegenhagen.

Danzig Mennonite Church in ruins.

Cherished places of worship were sadly given up.

In these barracks in Denmark they receive shelter and care.

sad news that a son who his mother still had hoped might be alive was dead. That was a bitter moment. How touching it was to sit there and have the father tell about the letter as the mother bravely wiped away the tears. Not many days before that there came another report to one concerning father and mother. Father has starved to death and mother is beyond hope. Still another has received word of most tragic experiences of loved ones who remained behind—so bitter and difficult that suicide seemed the only way out for them. The mailman does not always bring happy news. But today as we visit there are tears of joy—"our son is alive."

The conversation turns backwards to the days before the flight. Danzig was a beautiful city and our Mennonite brethren enjoyed the privileges of life. Our Mennonite people have always been a thrifty, hard-working people; and so it was with these in Danzig and the surrounding territory. What fine homes and establishments they had; their barns were full, their stalls filled with cattle—all the modern conveniences of life were at their disposal! Today, within the space of a few hours, everything has been changed. Their herds have been plundered, their barns have been burned to the ground, their fields have been flooded and still rest under several feet of water. In fact, our brethren have been stripped of absolutely everything so that today they stand as those who have nothing. On their flight ahead of the bursting bombs, whining bullets, and roaring flames it was impossible to rescue anything except the few clothes which one might be wearing or had hastily thrown into a bag. Even life itself was endangered, and many loved ones plunged from the burning decks of ships into a watery grave while others died of exposure and sickness.

From the horror of the past the conversation turns again into the future—what about the future? How long must we yet stay here in these camps? How shall these poor, widowed young mothers with their little ones face the coming days? What about these old grandmothers and grandfathers who stand alone and forsaken? Surely they cannot again begin anew to establish a home! Dreadful as has been the past, the future often causes even more anxiety. There seems to be so little that we can say as we sit and listen to the troubled questions which come from the lips of our brother in the faith. Yet we must say something which will be an encouragement and bit of cheer. Yes, above there still is the same God who has always provided a way out for His children and who still is able to do wonders. His promises are ever sure, and of His faithfulness there is no end. Also, there are the brethren in the faith across the waters in the States and Canada. Surely these will not stand idly by nor deny a helping hand.

Elder Bruno Ewert and family, now in Denmark, at their estate near Marienburg, 1939.

Our watch tells us that we must be on our way. Already we have stayed too long. Time passes quickly in a visit such as this. Before we leave we must have a word of prayer.

Only God knows the heartaches, the anxieties, the fears and bitter tears which are represented inside the confines of a refugee camp. Only He knows what burdens weigh down the heart and crush the spirit into hopelessness. Only He knows—but thanks be to Him, He does know about these, and in His own time He will make all things right.

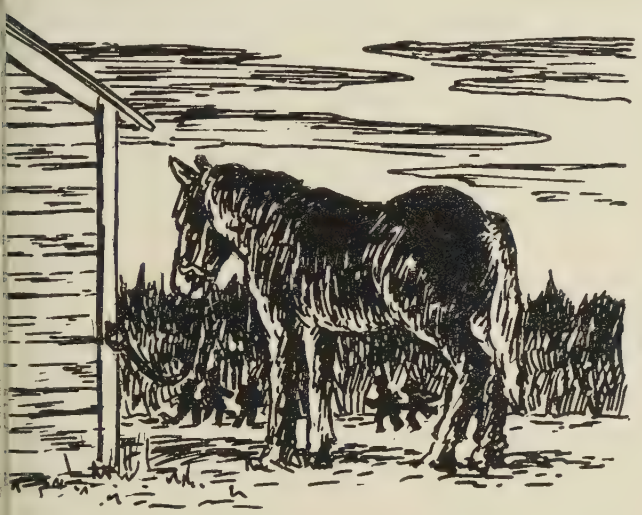
Already we have gone some distance when suddenly we stop. What is that call? Turning about we see a lonely man, standing in the distance and shouting after us. Yes, it is our good brother—all the others have turned back to their barracks. There he stands, waving once more and calling out with a heart-piercing cry: "AUF WIEDERSEHN!" O God—why—WHY? What have we done that we should be going off into the distance, free, and blessed with the riches of life which he must forego; he must suffer and agonize. Wherein have we been so much better or more faithful? Slowly we turn with a wave of the hand and go on. There is silence as we go on—not a word is spoken. Yes—those are tears which we are wiping from our eyes. Long shall we see in our memory the figure of that lonely man marked against the horizon, waving his hand. Long shall we continue to hear the piercing cry: "AUF WIEDERSEHN."

Well, here we are back home again in the land of sunshine and blessing. How happy we are that we can once more go about our daily round of tasks. It was good to spend these few moments in the camp with our brethren and to share a few of their experiences. Now we shall be better able to appreciate the riches of God's mercy which has been showered upon us during these years. Yet, somehow, we shall never be able to forget that lonely man; that heart-searching cry, "AUF WIEDERSEHN," keeps ringing in our ears. We cannot forget it. There are lonely hearts and troubled minds; hands are reaching out piteously for help—weary souls are seeking rest. Not one but hundreds are calling—calling, "AUF *WIEDERSEHN*." We must not fail them. There seems so little that can be done, and yet by the Grace of God even the feeble efforts can be blessed and mutiplied. Already the coming of the *Amerikaner* has brought a ray of hope—new courage has risen. We must not fail them in their hour of need.

The Old Country School

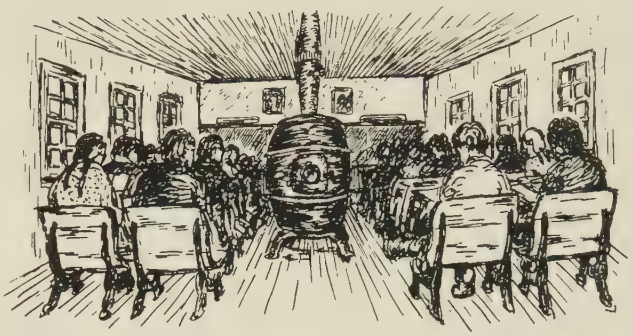
By E. E. LEISY

THE country schools of central Kansas at the turn of the century had a picturesqueness that makes them seem of a more remote past than they really are. I have good reason to prize my memories of those days, for I not only had my own elementary education in such a school, but began my teaching career in one, and subsequently taught in several others. What I recall, then, is a composite impression, one that I trust is truly representative. Kansas schools were usually located at a cross-road somewhere near the center of a district with a radius of about two and a half miles. I remember seeing even then references to the "little red schoolhouse," but all the schools I knew were painted white. Since ours had a red roof, however, it was many years before I realized that the phrase did not pertain to it but referred to the one-room brick schools of eastern states. Usually there was not a tree on the schoolground, nothing to obstruct the prairie playground except an outhouse or two. Once in a while a teacher's horse might be tethered on the grounds, but usually, except on the stormiest days, everyone walked. On two sides the



grounds were bordered by osage hedge and by a few tall cottonwoods in which the winds during early Fall made mournful noises.

Across the front of the building extended a plank platform. There was no vestibule, and one was ushered at once into a room, say forty by thirty, with tiers of double seats and desks. In the distance a blackboard extended across the back wall and encroached on the sides. Near the door, extending around each corner, were shelves on which reposed the pupils' tin dinner buckets, and above them were hooks for the children's coats and wraps. In the middle of the room was the black round stove, with the stove-pipe extending high overhead. On cold days the nearby pupils roasted while the remote ones froze. The younger pupils sat near the teacher's desk; the older ones farther away. In some schools boys sat on one side of the room, the girls on the other, but in not a few cases a younger brother and sister might sit together. Above the front blackboard were large, framed pictures of Washington and Lincoln, flanked by cases



containing wall-maps. In the corners were a bookcase, a big dictionary on a stand, perhaps a globe, certainly a reading-chart. Well do I remember those first days when I learned to co-ordinate: "a rat," "a man," "the cat ran," etc. I can still see the big, black letters and the neat script alongside. We marched up to the two long recitation benches, one for boys, the other for girls, directly in front of the teacher's desk. On the desk itself reposed a box of crayons, a book or two, a pointer, and the hand-bell which the teacher took to the front door to call the pupils in from play four times a day.

By nine o'clock pupils who had left home soon after winter sunrise had assembled for the day. In little groups they had trudged through sleet and snow over dirt roads and across fields and through groves, and one could note their frosty breath, pink cheeks, and mittened hands. In response to the ringing bell in the teacher's hand, bats or skates were tossed in a corner, and lines were formed for marching into the building to the tap of the bell. Roll call was first in order, and the response of "Here" or "Present" ran the gamut of children's voices. A song might be sung, perhaps a selection read, but usually opening exercises must be curtailed for the many recitations which were to be heard from all the eight grades throughout the day. The primer class came first, and after its ten minutes were up, was sent to its seats to write the alphabet or draw pictures.

One after another of the lower and upper divisions were heard in reading, history, arithmetic, geography, spelling, grammar, physiology, penmanship, civics. Some worked on the multiplication-table or tussled with percentage; later they might parse or diagram sentences, or look at the pictures in Barnes' *History* or at the maps

in Rand McNally. How anyone could concentrate on studies while classes were reciting in front is still beyond me! Some listened to the older pupils recite; others interrupted to ask a question they thought could not wait until the recitation was over. Still others looked out the window. Naturally, all sorts of rules had to be imposed. Giggling had to be suppressed, and penalties were sure to be invoked for whispering. Being made to stand in a corner or to stay in after school were the commonest modes of punishment. Whipping was seldom resorted to.

At ten-thirty and again at two-thirty there was a fifteen-minute "recess." Coming from the freedom of the farm as we did, this release from being packed into the district box while the blood of health bounced through our veins was doubly welcome. Instantly there rose a shout of "first bat," chorused by "pitch," "catch," and "first base," while there was a stampede for the outdoors. Girls indulged in more sedate games like "Drop the handkerchief" or "London Bridge," but could never run down hill without shrieking. At noon there was an hour's pause, and a real chance to glory in whatever sport was in season. First, however, was the rattle of tin, as lids came off the dinner buckets. Then, the odor of pent-up food permeated the room. But who was there to linger over sandwiches and cookies when there was "dare-base" or "work-up" or "handy-over" or "shinny" or "pom-pom pull-away" to play? Each season had its special sport. In Spring it was "mumble-t-peg"; in winter it was ice-skating, or coasting downhill for those who had sleds. The battle-royal, however, came when the whole school chose sides and mowed each other down with snowballs.

But even in the more academic exercises not all was humdrum routine. Sometimes there were "projects." Papier-mache maps were arranged on glass panes, or a grain of wheat, a kernel of rice, a coffee-bean, a toothpick was glued on a pink or yellow or green area to indicate a country's leading product. There were no picnics, and but few visitors, though once a season the County Superintendent came around to see that all was in order. On Friday afternoons there were ciphering or spelling matches, and just before Christmas one always learned to "speak pieces." Who does not remember "Over the hills and far away," and "'Twas the night before Christmas," as well as other favorites like "Once there was a little Kitty," "Baby-bye," "The Old Oaken Bucket," and "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck"? Each of these was recited with proverbial sing-song and end-line pause. Few there were who could make a dialogue sound realistic, and somebody always forgot his lines. We had no school organ, but among the songs we sang lustily I recall "Jingle Bells," "Love's Old Sweet Song," "In the Gloaming," "Spanish Cavalier," "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean," "Juanita," "Sweet Genevieve," "Red Wing," "School Days," and "Long, Long Ago."

Such was the old district school, as I recall it. Until one was thirteen one was expected to spend seven months of every year in its confines. For the bigger boys that was too much. They were needed on the farm. On one's way to school one might see them with a span of horses and a drill out on the fields sowing wheat, or a month or two later, husking corn and throwing the ears, periodically banging against the sideboard of the wagon-box. In midwinter they wrestled with the three R's, and mightily augmented respective sides on the playground, but with the coming of spring they drifted out of the schoolroom again and onto the fields. Many of them never finished school.

As I think back upon it, I believe our community was unusually fortunate in its teachers. All but one were men, and all had high standards. The last one was a woman, and she had been to the State Teachers College. If anything, she was even better than the men. Not until I undertook teaching myself did I realize what all went into the making of a teacher. If you planned to teach, you attended a four-week Normal Institute at the County Seat. Here, under the direction of experienced teachers, you had a complete rehearsal of as many as four common school subjects, with a demonstration of the most effective devices for teaching them. If you were successful in passing the examinations which followed, you received a third-grade certificate from the county superintendent. Higher-grade certificates required more experience.

Now your troubles really began. You had to drive around and see various school boards in soliciting your job. They might be at home and they might not. They might be near the home community and they might live far away. A more experienced teacher might have seen them first. But, if you were not too impatient, you might before long sign a contract. A kindly disposed director might even tip you off in regard to the school "bully." In those years a beginning teacher got about $35 dollars a month, and had to find his own room and board. There was no "boarding around" as seems to have been the custom in eastern settlements. Before the opening of school a teacher planned his work, reviewed the subjects, and ordered illustrative material. Once school was in session, he occupied a multitudinous role as instructor and disciplinarian, playmate and nurse, program-maker, song leader, and janitor. He built his own fires, looked after the ventilation, and swept the room at the end of the long day. If he had far to come and it was cold, he built kindling the evening before; but as not all sparks had always been shaken out of the grate, he sometimes found his carefully laid plans gone up in smoke before next morning's cold arrival. Blackboards had to be erased and work for the next day put in order. It was fortunate that teachers were young and full of energy, or we could never have survived putting forty-seven pupils, ranging in age from five to twenty, through thirty-two classes a day, and cleaned up the premises besides! Verily those were heroic days—and they were happy days as well. The modern school ma'am, with her handful of pupils and up-to-date equipment, can hardly know what I am talking about. My heart goes out to her, nevertheless.

The taxidermist, Richard H. Schmidt, busy in his workshop on his farm near Canton, Kansas.

THE LORD'S HANDIWORK IN OUR FIELDS

BY RICHARD H. SCHMIDT

NATURE IS one of the great witnesses for God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Students of nature, geologists, biologists, and astronomers marvel at the greatness of the Creator. Truly, only "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."

Many of my young friends who have returned from distant seas have verified Psalm 127:23-24: "They that go down to the seas in ships see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." Since it has never been my opportunity to study nature abroad, I have sought the wonders of the Lord's handiwork by going alone deep in the native fields, meadows, and woodlots of my home community near Canton, Kansas, and, I am happy to say, have found there about two hundred and fifty varieties of native birds and animals.

No bird collector and taxidermist ever feels that he is a slave to his work. One does not watch the clock for quitting time; in the joy of the work one forgets time.

One of the thrills of the bird collector consists in finding species of birds that have hitherto been reported in other localities only. It is also possible to find a species of bird that has been reported extinct in the locality for many years.

A few years ago I added to my collection a Louisiana heron, a species never officially recorded in Kansas. I also secured a chestnut-sided warbler, a bird which Col. N. S. Goss, the greatest Kansas ornithologist, never saw in our state. Incidents of this nature happen because life is ever changing. Nature is never static.

The taxidermist cannot feel that he has become master of his trade nor can he feel that he surpasses all pre-

The king of birds.

The author uses a portable collection of mounted birds to illustrate his lectures to Scout groups, clubs, and schools.

vious artists—God himself is the Master Artist who made the material that the taxidermist tries to preserve. After He finished His work, He inspected it and "behold it was very good." The taxidermist invents nothing new. All he has to do is imitate the Master Artist.

As one observes the native birds, he finds great contrasts. Let us note, for instance, the eagle and the humming bird. One is the largest of birds, the other is the smallest, yet both can be found in the Goessel community. The eagle, so powerful that he can kill a full-grown sheep, builds a nest and adds to it every year until it weighs two tons or more. The humming bird, on the other hand, feeds on the nectar of the honeysuckle and builds a nest the size of a teaspoon out of the finest down, and lays an egg the size of a pea.

Let us take a candid look at the life and behavior of some of our bird friends. The swifts, an interesting species of bird, build their nests of sticks stuck to the inside chimney wall with a glue secreted from their bill. They perch only in chimneys and the tail feathers, which have barbs on the ends, aid them in climbing up the wall. Originally, the chimney swifts lived in hollow trees, and only after the settlement of this country had taken place did they move into chimneys. The reader will think that these birds must certainly look dirty if they live in sooty chimneys. But this is not the case. The marvelously foresighted Creator gave them a coat of feathers exactly the color of soot thousands of years before they started living in chimneys. Here we say, "Lord, how wonderful are Thy works, in wisdom Thou hast made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches."

Another interesting bird is the swallow, a cousin to the swift. Especially noteworthy is the fact that in some of the old Catholic missions of the West, these birds migrate on exactly the same day each year. It reminds one of Jeremiah 8:7: "Yea, the stork of the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle and the crane and the swallow know the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." When we look into world affairs today, this is as true as it was in the days of Jeremiah. Nature goes on in clocklike fashion, but man lives in confusion and in disregard of the approaching judgment.

The behavior of birds and animals often reminds us of some people. Symbolism of this kind is used in the Bible. The Psalmist says: "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," and Moses says in Deuteronomy 32:11-12: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." These passages show how human and divine traits of character are portrayed in the behavior of birds and animals.

When we visit in the fields with our native birds, they also strangely remind us of people. There is, for instance, the cuckoo who hides when people wish to see him. There are people like that in the church. Let us not judge such

a person too harshly, for as a cuckoo does a most beneficial work of eating insects in spite of his shyness, so the person of shy disposition also fills a place of usefulness. The Lord says, "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Then there is the kingbird who is strikingly human, yes, even possessing characteristics found among Mennonites. He is among the finest birds alive, wholly beneficial in his feeding habits, yet what about his dispositions? The first bird I hear in the morning and the last bird I hear at night is the same: the kingbird. What does he do all day? He scolds and quarrels over trifles. He has a great sense of possession and allows no neighbor to trespass into his tree. When he sees an evil crow pass by, he takes it upon himself to drive it away. So he has occasion to quarrel all day and finds no time to sing a song of adoration and gratitude to his Maker.

The robin is a better example of Christian character. Of him, Martin Luther said: "A gay little robin is the best preacher I have. I put crumbs upon my windowsill, especially at night. He hops to the window when he wants his supper and takes as much as he needs, from thence he always hops to a tree near by, lifts his voice to God, sings his carol of praise and gratitude, tucks his head under his wing, falls fast asleep, and leaves tomorrow to look out for itself."

Usually when the plumage of the male and female of a specie is alike, the pair divide equally all the work of building the nest, incubating, and, later, caring for the young. Often, however, the male is beautifully colored and the female wears a dull, plain dress. Where this difference exists, the male spends most of his time singing, strutting, and fighting with the other birds and leaves all the hard work to his meek little spouse.

There is, however, one species of bird, the Wilson's phalarope, in which the color scheme corresponds to that of the human race. That is, the female wears all the beautiful colors, while the male wears a plain light gray suit. With this reversal of the color scheme, the social order is also reversed. The female does all the strutting, even the courting. She leaves the male to care for the children while she preens her beautiful plumage and strolls along the beach. When the male gives the alarm call, she rushes back and does the fighting while her hen-pecked husband hides in fear.

Finally, let us consider the beautiful little dickcissel, appropriately nicknamed "harvest bird." If there is any bird made especially to lighten man's burdens by song, it is the dickcissel. He seems to want to sing as close to the toiling harvest machinery as possible. Often during a particularly wet season, men are tempted to swear as they labor feverishly while being bogged down with combine and tractor. Then the little dickcissel comes, perches on the nearest post, and pours out a song of praise and thanksgiving.

Hear that little dickcissel holler
Fairly reveling in song;
He doesn't care how hard it's pouring,
He doesn't care a mite how long.
Though he's getting wet and sopping,
He says weather all depends
On the state of one's own feeling:
What is best the good Lord sends.

Some of the cases of Richard H. Schmidt's collection on exhibition at the Wichita Public Historical Museum.

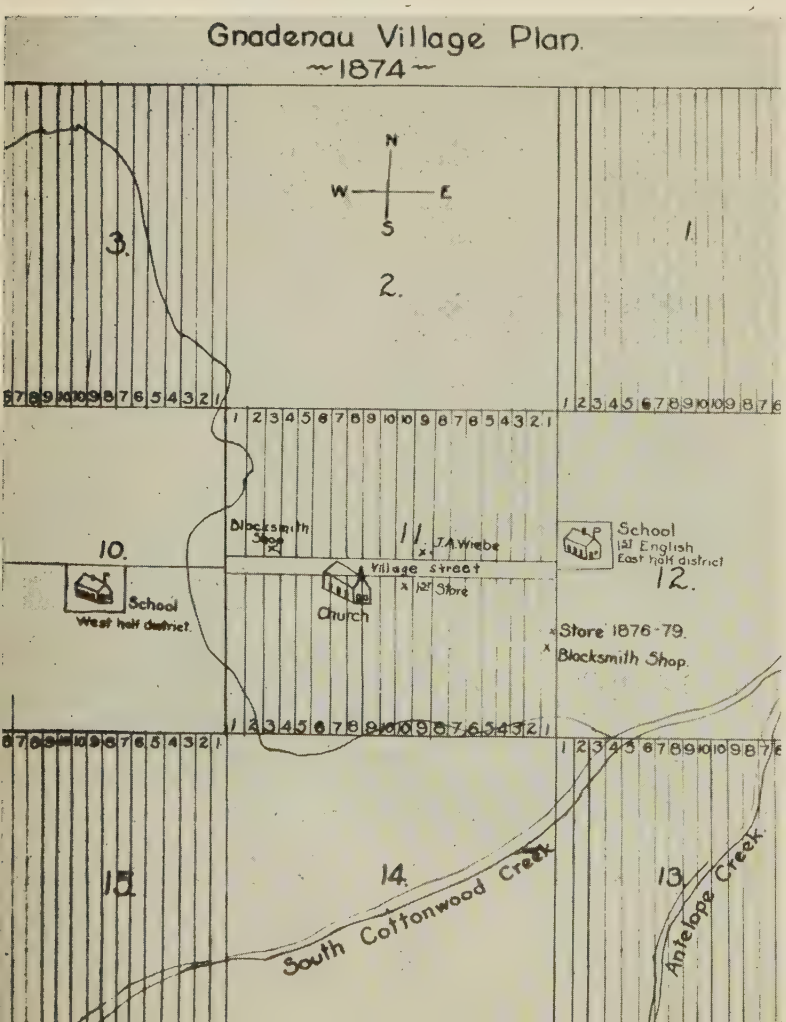
A Mennonite Village in Kansas

BY ALBERTA PANTLE

GNADENAU, two miles southeast of the present Hillsboro, Kansas, was settled by the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren in August, 1874. The site was chosen by Jacob A. Wiebe, elder of the congregation, and one of the members, Franz Janzen. After negotiating with C. B. Schmidt, land agent for the Santa Fe Railroad, for twelve sections of land in Risley Township, Marion county, Elder Wiebe sent for his people whom he had left behind in Elkhart, Indiana.

The congregation arrived in Peabody, the nearest railroad point, August 16. They were met by Mennonites already established in the county, who came with teams and wagons to take them to their new home. Undoubtedly the colonists, weary after their long trek from the Crimea, were disappointed in the country as they traveled over the rolling prairie northwest of Peabody.

The village of Gnadenau was located on Section 11, and the farm-strips on Sections 1, 3, 15, and 13.



Early dwelling in Gnadenau.

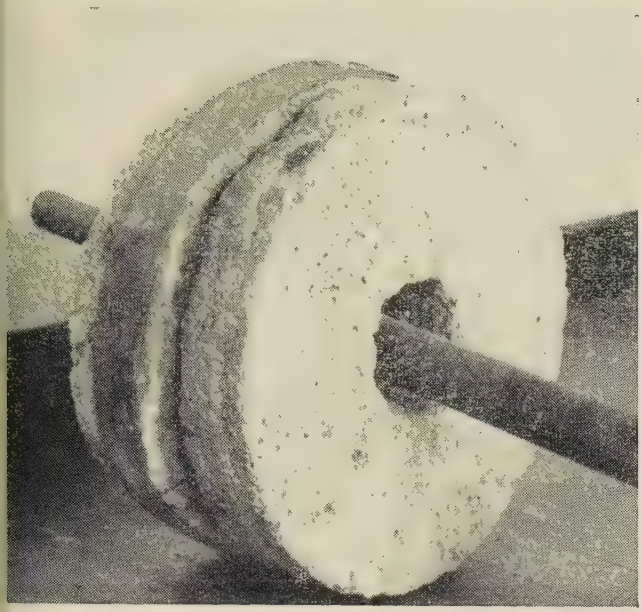
The summer had been dry and hot, and a grasshopper plague early in the month had destroyed all green vegetation. There were a few settlers' shanties, but most of them had been deserted by their owners, who had decided they could not make a living in such a country.

Undaunted, Elder Wiebe and his people set about establishing themselves in their new homes. Deciding upon a communal form of settlement, they chose Section 11 as the site for the village proper and called it "Gnadenau" or "Meadow of Grace." The outlying sections were divided into long narrow strips and apportioned to the various families for agricultural purposes. For a number of reasons the communal system proved to be impracticable and was abandoned after about two years.

By late fall, houses had been built, wells had been dug, some sod broken for cultivation, and a few acres of wheat planted on plowed land rented from neighbors. The first houses were constructed of prairie sod, cut into brick form, and dried in the sun. Some of them had no side walls, with the roofs starting from the ground and only the gables laid up with adobe. The roofs were made of poles and thatched with reeds. Adobe chimneys projected twelve inches or so above the dry hay. To the casual visitor the village had the appearance of a group of hay racks.

The inside of the hut was partitioned. In one end the family lived, and in the other the animals were sheltered. Furniture consisted chiefly of trunks and chests, but there was an abundance of warm bedding in each home; and nearly every family had an old clock reaching from the ceiling to the floor, with weights and pendulum of polished brass. Some of these clocks, more than hundred years old, had been carried from Germany to Russia, and finally to America.

The greatest curiosity about the house was the oven-fireplace, with which the cooking was done and the



Stones used in grist mill operated by Jacob Friesen. Now in Tabor College Museum.

whole house well heated for twenty-four hours, all from the burning of four, good-sized armfuls of straw. In a country where fuel was so scarce and expensive and straw so plentiful, the oven fireplace was looked upon with favor. At least one American neighbor installed one in his home and others planned to do so.

The early adobe huts were soon replaced with neat frame houses. They, too, usually had the stable and dwelling under the same roof with the granary over all. The houses were set back far enough from the village street to allow for the planting of fruit- and shade-trees and the setting out of flowers. E. W. Hoch visited Gnadenau in 1876 and wrote that the yards were immense bouquets. He thought, "Every other town in Marion county might well imitate Gnadenau in this respect."

For their first supplies the villagers had to go to either Peabody or Marion Centre. It is likely that most of the trading was done at the former because it was on the railroad. Grain and livestock had to be hauled there for shipment for several years after the founding of the colony.

As in the case of the other inland towns of the country, a store was soon opened at Gnadenau. It operated for only a few months, and no other store was located there until March of 1878. During the latter part of 1876 a grist mill, operated by a large Dutch windmill, was erected just west of the village. The mill was built and run by Jacob Friesen and his son, Jacob J. Friesen. There is no record of the length of time the mill was used, but the building itself stood until about twenty-five years ago. In later years it served as a granary.

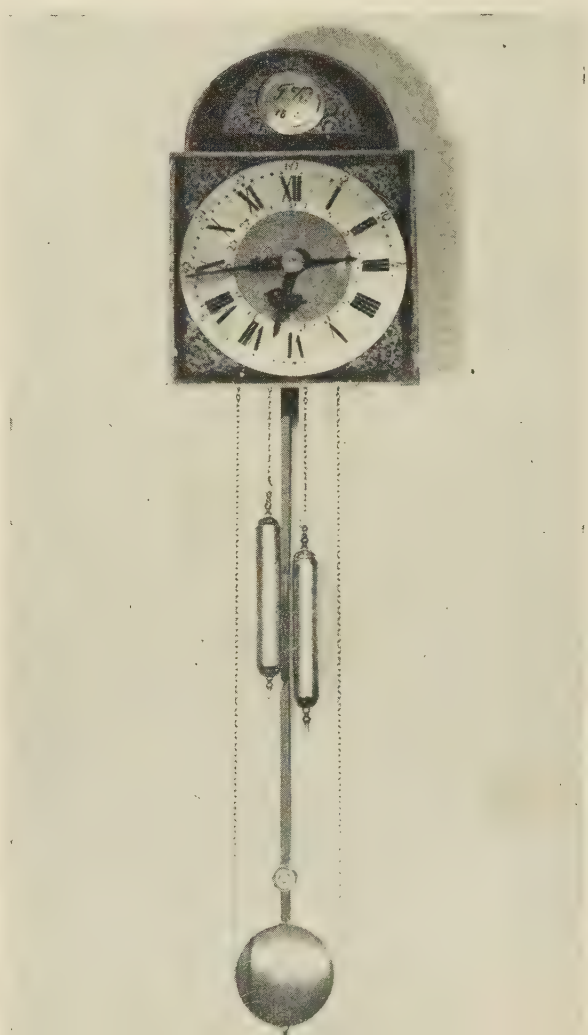
Several sorghum mills were located near Gnadenau. They did a good business because sorghum molasses was a staple article of food among the Mennonites. A former resident of the village states that some of the families used as much as a hundred gallons a year. Considering the fact that there were ten, twelve, and even more children to feed in many families, this does not seem exaggerated.

Two blacksmith shops were established in the village, and other businesses flourished until 1879 when the Marion and McPherson branch of the Santa Fe was built and Hillsboro was established two miles northwest of Gnadenau. Gradually the need for stores and tradesmen dimished, and Hillsboro became their trading center.

The first church building in Gnadenau was erected in the fall of 1874. It was made of adobe with thatched roof similar to the first houses. The walls of this building soon crumbled, and in 1877 a frame church was built. By 1895 many of the members of the church had settled on farms south and west of the village, and the present Krimmer Mennonite Brethren church was built two and one-half miles south of Hillsboro. Many members of the original colony are buried in the cemetery adjacent to this church.

Because of their unusual habits of living and dress, the early Mennonites were a source of curiosity to the American settlers living nearby. The men and boys

Every Gnadenau family had an old clock similar to this one.



dressed much alike and the little girls, in their full skirts and white aprons, looked like miniatures of their mothers. Clothing could be and usually was of the finest materials, but no lace or other ornamentation was allowed. Blue was a favorite color. For many years the women did not wear hats to church but tied a kerchief or shawl over their heads. Musical instruments were not used in the church, and part singing was frowned upon.

For many years the church officials at Gnadenau sought to maintain the beliefs and practices of the congregation as it was organized in 1869, but gradually they have become less rigid and, today, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren church is very little different from any other Mennonite church.

School District No. 11, in which Gnadenau was located, was a very large district, organized in 1871. It was referred to at that time as the Risley school. The village children did not attend the public school, however, for at least two years. Having been accustomed to their own church schools in Russia, they planned to continue the practice in America. After 1876 the pupils attended the public school when it was in session and attended the church school during vacation periods.

The first German schoolhouse in Gnadenau, erected in the fall of 1874, was located on the south side of the street. This building served as a meetinghouse as well. After a short time the walls crumbled and the school was moved to the home of the teacher, the Reverend Johann Harder. One or two rooms in his house were used exclusively by the family, and at night the Harder children slept in the schoolroom. The desks were pushed aside and the benches joined together to serve as beds.

During the first year or two Mr. Harder received no salary but had an agreement with each family having children in school to bring a load of building material—either rocks or lumber—to be used in the construction of a house. After he began teaching in his own house, he was paid a certain amount for each pupil. The last year he taught, the school was held in the meetinghouse, and he received a salary of $30 a month.

The early years at Gnadenau were filled with hardships and dangers. Prairie fires were common. The first fall a fire, reported to have swept down from fifty miles north threatened the village itself. Unused to such a spectacle, the Mennonites did not know what to do. Mr. Risley, their neighbor to the east, brought his plow and turned protective furrows around the entire section. Prairie fires at or near Gnadenau were frequently reported in the local newspapers. In the *Marion County Record* for April 13, 1877, we find: "It [Gnadenau] comes very near being the banner town for prairie fires. One sees them day and night. One ran against John G. Hill's farm last week, destroying his hedge which was six years old, besides killing between five and six thousand fine peach trees and some shrubbery. . . . ."

Grasshoppers destroyed some of the crops in July, 1876, and again in September, 1877, when they were so bad that the people were reminded of the plague of 1874. Some years the crops suffered from lack of rain. Horse thieves were frequently reported at Gnadenau as late as 1879. The reluctance of the Mennonites to prosecute or take any part in court proceedings may have been the reason why so many horses were stolen from them.

Gnadenau, in its early years, was enough of a novelty on the Kansas prairies to attract a great number of visitors. W. J. Groat, a frequent visitor at the village, once wrote that the person living within the limits of Marion county who had never visited one of the Mennonite villages was to be compared with people who, living in the vicinity of Niagara Falls or Kentucky's great cave, would not visit them.

Mennonites in Fiction--Gnadenau

BY G. BAERG

Flamethrowers

In his novel, *Flamethrowers* (published by the Claxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1936), Gordon Friesen depicts the life in an imaginary Mennonite community, Blumenhof, posited a few miles south of Hoffnungsthal and Gnadenau, the latter apparently serving as the prototype of the fictional Blumenhof. The individual titles of the four books, into which the lengthy novel is divided, forcefully suggest the soaring nature of the work. They are: "Guides for an Endless Crossing." "Stairway to the Stars," "Winds Too Swift for Fumbling Snares," "Bow Down to the Stubborn Earth." With those titles the reader may well expect to be taken on an ultra-stratospheric journey, and time and again he can just see the author forcing his imagination to go beyond the limits of human experiences or attainment in order that the reader shall not be disappointed. Unfortunately the imaginary flights into space and beyond do not all turn out as felicitously as the titles might suggest.

The plot of the novel concerns itself chiefly with the boy Peter Franzman and his parents, Jacob and Therese Franzman. The beginning immediately arouses interest, for it presents the gripping episode of Jacob Franzman fleeing with his family at night from Russia across a river (presumably the Prosna) into Germany. The brutal Russian guide, who helps them across, and the drowning of a baby brother make an indelible im-

pression upon the ten-year old Peter, an impression that is so deeply etched into his soul that it haunts him to the end of the story. That they had to steal across the frontier around 1910 seems to be a slight anachronism, as restrictions on emigration were imposed only after the Soviets came to power.

Arriving in Blumenhof, Jacob Franzman does his utmost to be a successful farmer and to give his son Peter a good education. With this endeavor he encounters the opposition of his wife, Therese, who feels that learning will turn the boy from the faith of his fathers, in which fear she is sustained by Isaac Liese, the chief elder and founder of the Blumenhof Church, who quivers with a curious Freudian complex whenever in the presence of Therese.

Apparently the story covers approximately ten years, from 1910 to 1920, during which time Jacob Franzman reaches relative prosperity, acquiring nearly a section of land, and then loses it all in the end during the postwar depression. Peter, in the meantime, finishes the common school, high school, and one year of college. This period is richly dotted with all manner of incidents of agricultural, amorous, or religious nature, most of them delved into rather ecstatically and expressionistically. Consequently, many of them become distorted caricatures of whatever prototypes they may have had, if any. The story describes a fairly symmetric curve, beginning with poverty which is overcome by determined optimism and aggressiveness and ending, as far as the parents are concerned, in disillusionment, poverty, and death. Such an end might have been achieved just as surely and even more speedily by remaining in Russia. The son Peter returns to a college instructor, with whom he has fallen in love and who should have known better, since she is ten years his senior.

For the presentation of his main characters the author draws too heavily on the darker colors to make them representative of the average Mennonites. Their general lack of mental agility and their inability to adapt themselves cheerfully to whatever they cannot change is very plausible. One may also accept without argument the almost complete absence of a sense of humor. But his Therese is bigoted and resentful beyond human endurance, and Jacob is too earthly. If their natures were as far apart as they are supposed to be, they would never have become sufficiently interested in each other to get married. Their son is a curious combination of physical vigor and abstract intellectuality, so introverted that all frustrations and rebuffs accumulate in his soul until it would require several men to carry the load. The prominent church members are either avaricious or slanderous, depending upon the persuasion and the occasion. That Isaac Liese, the leader of the church, pretends to cure ailments by laying on hands seems like a deliberate misrepresentation. There was the elder, Jacob A. Wiebe, who with great patience and very sensitive fingers did set broken bones, sprained joints, and wrenched ligaments or muscles and did it expertly; but I have never heard him or anyone else claim that he could perform miracles. Nor did he live by himself in a shack out in a cornfield.

Concerning the characterization, allowance must be made for difference of opinion, but the reader is positively annoyed by the tortuous style and the grammatical errors, of which possibly all the common ones and some uncommon ones are represented. On page 27 we read that Jacob "laid there and rested"; and on page 155, that Liese "let it [his hand] lay there for a moment." He mixes the two common expressions "cannot but feel" and "cannot help feeling" and comes forth with: "Even Peter could not help but feel," which obviously means something quite different. Infinitives are split vigorously: "Content to always and humbly follow a mocking guide," (p. 453) and on page 224 to our amazement, "a quilt her mother had made before she was born." Occasionally so much violence is thrust into the expressions that instead of being impressive they become absurd. Imagine the effect upon Peter when "His mother's eyes were thick foaming whirlpools, over-

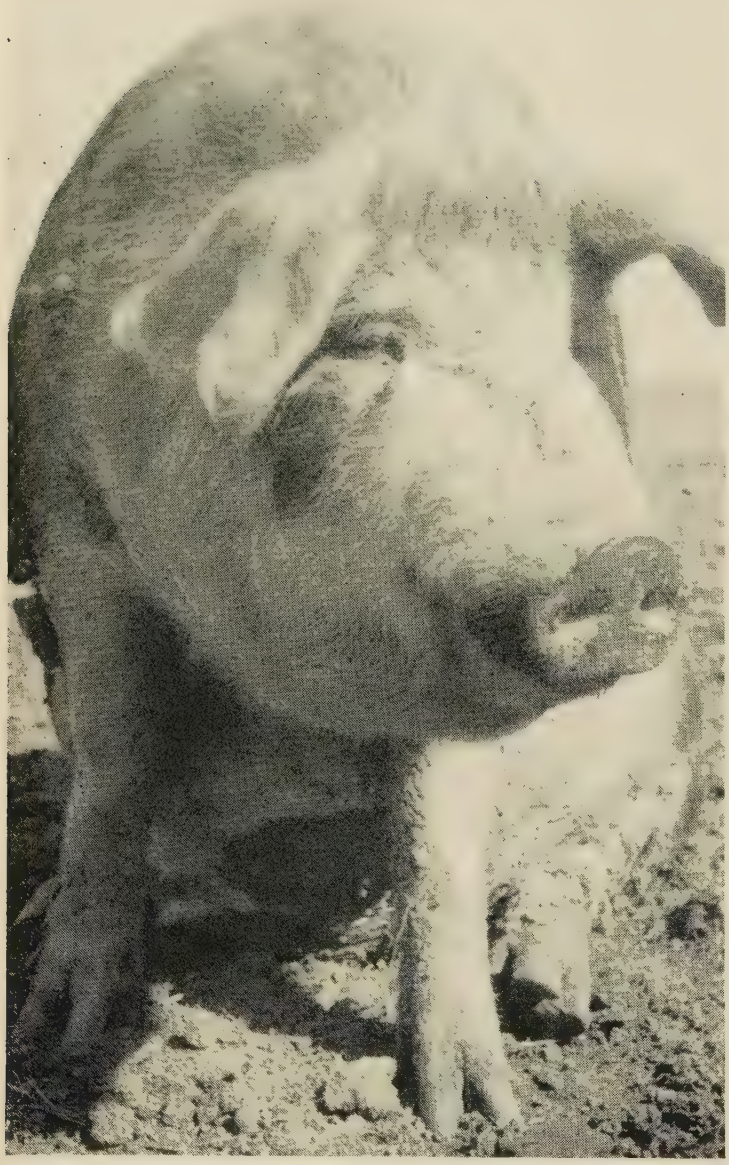
throwing him." (p. 160) Perhaps that helps to explain his rage which was so great that "a couple of shadows, crowding closer to him, fell back before his fury." (p. 339)

Similar outbursts, showing the lack of artistic restraint, could be gathered by the page. Goethe it seems was right in saying: "*In der Beschraenkung zeigt sich der Meister.*" Of the transposed sequence and resulting contorted sentence I shall give just one example, from page 376: "A vast melancholy, terrifying, came over Peter." Rarely does one find passages that run along smoothly and evenly to furnish enjoyable and effortless reading. Instead, one encounters exasperating remarks by the author, who is supposed to be objective, concerning his own characters or their (his own) words. Of Duane Terrison, the teacher, he says: "Oh, you silly,

(Continued on page 38)

I Remembe

By F



Before

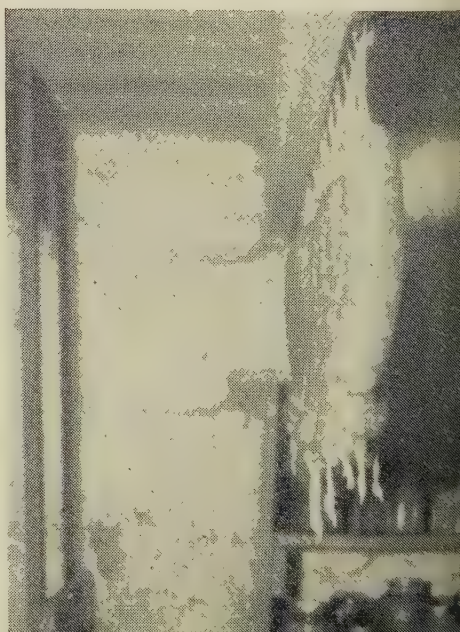
I REMEMBER butchering because it was filled with smells and sensations I loved: hot meat simmering on a low fire, red sausage resting in wash tubs, and the feel of slick casings slipping through your fingers. Yes, among my fondest memories are the *Wurst*-making days on the farm. My grandparents and parents, along with the uncles and aunts, made the sausage and cured the meats according to traditional German recipes. I believe these recipes are as much instinct as measurements written on paper.

How well I remember the princely life lead by the hogs and beef selected for our own table. Every whim of their appetite was satisfied. But then came one of those chill wintry days when the snow crackles under your feet. And at four o'clock in the morning father would have the fire going under the big iron kettle in the hog shed. A few hours later the lid would be removed and the big barrel filled with the scalding water. A few ashes were tossed in to make the hair slice. The pigs would be jerked into the air and a long knife disappeared for a few brief moments. The blood would drip on the ground, or into a stone crock if we were going to make *Blutwurst*. Then came the task of scalding and scraping. With luck and with the temperature just right this could be accomplished in a few minutes. In half an hour three white carcasses were hanging on three single trees.

Father and Uncle would begin the task of removing the entrails along with the heart and liver. With knives that had been ground and honed until they cut with the slightest touch, work would begin. I was always fascinated by the wonders of life as it unfolded with each deft cut. Finally came the washing and then dividing the carcasses through the center.

Stuffing *Metwurst.*

Metwurst ho



ITCHERING

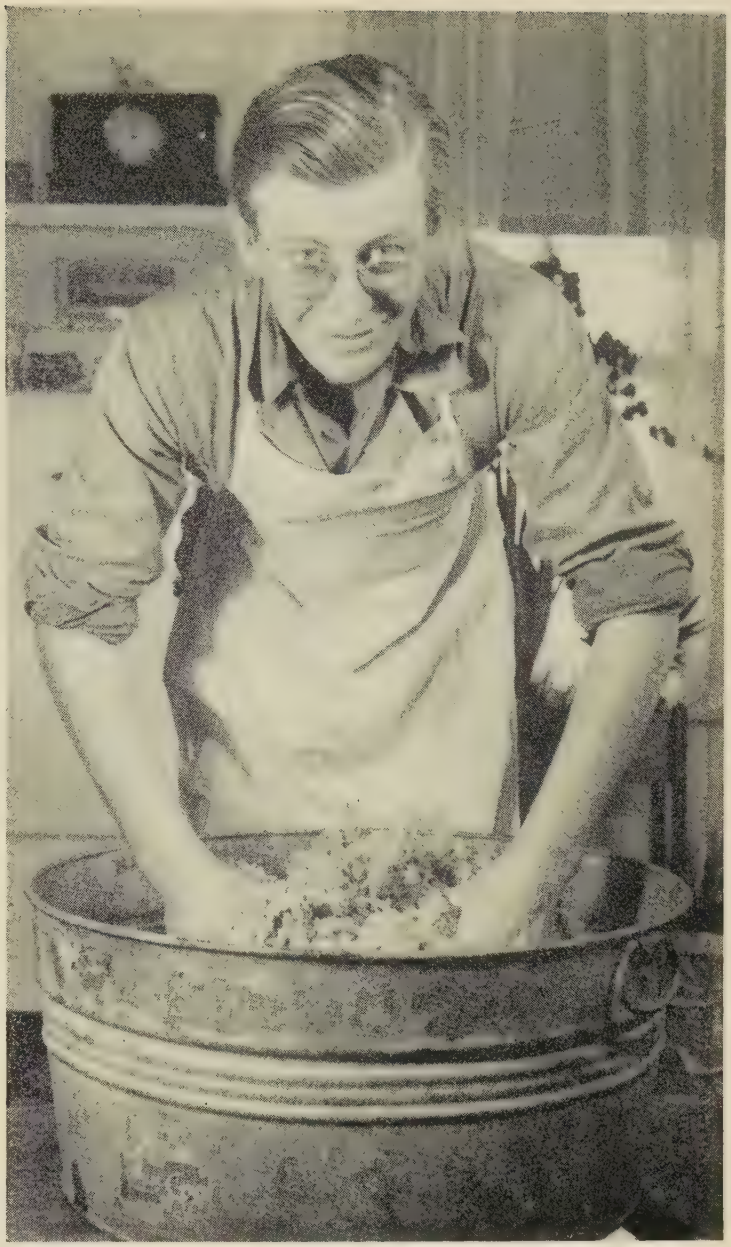
RS

In the afternoon perhaps a beef, that enjoyed the same kind of sheltered life as the hogs, was butchered. Of course, there was no need for boiling kettles of water, only for deft fingers and sharp knives. Finally everyone heaved a big sigh. The difficult part of butchering, the killing, was over. From now on we no longer thought of it as individual hog or beef that we had fed for so long but as meat—as sausage. There remained only the back-breaking work of carrying the halves and quarters down into the cellar after they had cooled for the remainder of the day.

The next day was set aside for the making of the sausage, and to me that was the best part of all. Four o'clock would find Father in the cellar standing at the long wooden table cutting and sorting meat. This piece into that crock; this piece into that washtub. Each had its place according to its use. It would be the middle of the forenoon before all of the hams were trimmed, the bacon cut, and the meat for the *Metwurst* weighed. Roughly, we used two thirds lean pork and one third beef. Meanwhile, mother and the aunts were busy upstairs cooking meat. The whole house smelled of cooking beef and pork. This smell was welcomed at first, but it became nauseating after the third or fourth day.

Then came the grinding, with a huge sausage grinder powered by a gasoline engine or a tractor. That which went into the *Metwurst,* or summer sausage, was ground twice. The very best meat went into the *Metwurst:* pork chops, loin, steak, and very little fat. We liked good *Metwurst.*

There is something of instinct, as already stated, in the making of summer sausage. There is something in the feel to see if it has the proper consistency. There is



After

That is why I remember butchering.

he cellar.

something in the touch to see if it is too warm or too cold. There is something in the taste to see if it is properly seasoned. Father measured the salt with an old cup. Then he added the mustard seed, whole pepper, salt petre, and smoked salt. We rolled up our sleeves and dived in to the elbow and began kneading. It is work to knead the sausage, because it is cold and stiff. The salt burns your skin. It takes almost half an hour to knead a wash tub of sausage. Then mother would roll a bit of a ball and fry it while we all gathered about to taste it appraisingly. Father would add salt, pepper or other spices according to the majority's opinion.

In the afternoon comes the biggest part of all. The stuffing of the *Metwurst*. There would be the crock of warm slick casings. Father would make a huge ball of sausage and then with all his might he would slam it into the stuffer with the sound of a 12-gauge shot-gun going off. This vigor is necessary to remove all air pockets. The lid was closed, and I would turn slowly. Uncle always stripped the casings over the tube of the stuffer and then with his sensitive fingers he would fill them just right. Mother and the aunts took the sausage and tied them with a stout cord.

After the summer sausage came the lesser sausages. There would be the *Bratwurst*, or pork saugage. This was stuffed in small round casings, or double links were made by twisting the casings after they had been loosely filled. We always liked the *Bratwurst* better if it had been made into wieners.

Finally, we would make the *Blutwurst*, or blood sausage; the *Leberwurst;* the *Rindwurst*, or beef sausage, which was cooked and put into jars, and then on icy mornings was reheated until the whole room was filled with its fragrance. There was the *Sulze*, or head cheese, and last the *Panhas*. This last is a kind of mush made with corn meal and pork juice, and it is sliced and fried, then served with syrup.

The next day the hams and bacons would be put into the brine, and the sugar cure was begun. Mother would start canning the meat which was not put into sausage. Lastly, and this came usually on the fifth day, the lard was rendered in the big iron kettle. At the end of the week we could all breathe easier. About six weeks later the smoke house would be filled with swinging hams and bacon. There would be the long straight rows of plump sausages absorbing the delicate flavor which only hickory smoke can impart.

How I would love to slip into the smoke house and shave a thin brown slice of the tender hams or slip the tiniest sliver off the bacon and then rub it with a knife so Father would never miss it. After a few weeks of smoking, the meat moved into the cellar to await the table. How we would eye the largest sausage and wonder when it would come down from its stick! Usually such an one came down only when a personage of the stature of the minister came for supper. But no butcher has ever been able to capture the fragrance and the tempting goodness of that largest *Metwurst* hanging so temptingly there in the cellar and getting better with every day.

So perhaps that is why I remember butchering. I recall the smell of cooking meat and the feel of your arms in a tub of sausage. That is why I like to be home on the first or second week in January when Father begins sharpening his knives and mother begins looking up her yellowed recipes for *Wurst*. That is why I remember butchering.

Schweineschlachten

ARNOLD DYCK

Schon früh beginnt es sich im Hause zu regnen. Es ist draußen noch ganz finster, als Vater in die Sommerstube kommt und Berend weckt. Dabei wird auch Hans wach, und auch der fährt nun gleich in die Kleider, denn er will sich auch nichts durchgehen lassen.

In der Sommerküche, unter den beiden Mauergrapen, brennt schon das Mistfeuer. Die Brühe wird da gekocht. Draußen, vor der Küchentür, steht der Brühtrog, in der Nähe am Zaun lehnt eine kurze Leiter, über der der Fangstrick hängt. In der Scheune wurden schon gestern große Tische aufgebaut für den „Ausnehmer". Auch der Barabantisch von der Dreschmaschine ist darunter. An einer freien, sauber gefegten Stelle hängt vom Balken herunter an einer Pflugkette das Hangholz. Daran wird man das Schwein hochziehen zum Ausschlachten. In der Nähe auf einem Hackklotz liegt das Beil. Es ist alles an seinem Platz und in bester Ordnung. Das findet auch Vater, der mit der Stallaterne in der Hand alle Vorbereitungen nachprüft, und den Hans auf seinem Rundgang begleitet. Beide gehen nun über den Hof zurück in die Sommerküche.

* * *

„Kommt zum Frühstück," ladet Vater jetzt ein, „Ohm Aron kommt schon." Alle begeben sich in die kleine Stube. Hans aber ist am allerwenigsten nach essen, es dauert ihm alles schon viel zu lange. Und auch die Jungen sind noch immer nicht da. Er läuft wieder hinaus zum Schweinehock. Und dieses Mal stehen sie richtig da, seine Freunde: Isaak, Dietrich, Heinrich, und auch Kornelius ist da.

Iwan, der Knecht, der im Stall bei den Schweinen ist, versucht nun, eines davon abzusondern und hinauszusteuern. Die Schweine sind aber unruhig geworden,

b sie etwas ahnten, sie wollen nicht hinaus. Aber plötz- ich schießt eins durch das Loch und — gleitet glatt durch ie Schlinge.

* * *

Beim zweiten geht alles glatt ab. „Ohm Joap" atte die Schlinge enger, und es gab überhaupt weni- er zu kommandieren. Die andern beiden dürfen noch ine weitere Stunde leben, denn es muß erst noch mehr Brühe fertig gemacht werden.

Hansens Freunde laufen nun nach Hause, er selber ber stellt sich an den Brühtrog und sieht sich das erste nd letzte Bad derer aus dem Schweinestall an. Man egt das Schwein dazu in den Trog, zuerst mit dem tücken nach oben, die Beine ausgestreckt. Und dann ommt die Brühe. Ein Eimer nach dem andern wird hm über den Rücken gegossen, über den Kopf und in die Ohren die mit einem Nagel zusammengesteckt sind.

Aber nun muß er zur Schule. Gern wäre er heute u Hause geblieben. Früher hat man es gedurft, aber nter Lehrer Dyck ist das endgültig „aus der Mode" ekommen.

* * *

Die andern haben schon zu Mittag gegessen, als sich ie drei Freunde an den langen Tisch setzen. Es ist gut, aß sie allein sind, so fühlen sie sich freier. Mutter sieht ch und zu zur Tür herein, ob nicht etwas fehlt.

Nach dem Essen streichen sie durch Stall und Scheu- ne. Die Schweine sind schon zerlegt, es müssen also ihre Schwänze irgendwo sein und die Blasen. Die Blasen assen sich so fein durch eine Strohhalm aufpusten, und enn man dann Maiskörner der Erbsen hineintut und ie trocknen läßt, so hat man das schönste Klappergerät. Und die Schwänze, die brauchen sie noch notwendiger. Drei finden sie. Der vierte fehlt. Ob schon jemand damit erumläuft? Das kann schon sein, denn „Speck gemes- en" müssen die Alten schon haben, das hört man an hrer lebhaften Unterhaltung.

Die Jungen drängen sich unter die Alten, die in er Sommerstube sitzen und Schweinefüße und Ohren utzen und dabei rauchen und heitere Geschichten erzäh- en. Nein, die sind noch alle unbeschwänzt. Na, dann hat en vierten eben einer von den Alten in der Tasche und auert auf eine Gelegenheit.

„Jungens, hinaus!" — Die Alten sind unruhig geworden. Sie denken an den Fall bei Dietrich Harms und fahren sich mit der Hand verstohlen über die Stelle, wo bei den Vierfüßlern ein Schwanz zu hängen pflegt.

Etwas später findet sich aber ganz unerwartet auch der vierte Schwanz. Als Isaak — es ist in der deutschen Stunde — an die Wandtafel gehen muß, um ein Dik- tat zu schreiben, da lacht mit einmal die ganze Klasse so laut los, daß er erschreckt herumfährt. Dabei hat dann auch Lehrer Dyck das niedliche Schweineschwänzchen be- merkt, das dem Isaak da so keck hinten am Wams bau- melt. Das ist für Hans der kritische Moment: wie wird der Lehrer sich zu dem Spaß stellen. Hans hatte ja nicht erwartet, daß Isaaks Schwanz die lange Mittagspause überleben würde. Nun ist es schlimm, sehr schlimm, denn leugnen wird er es nicht, wenn es erst soweit kommt .... Lehrer Dyck ist aber auch nicht ohne Humor, und er weiß auch, daß die Schweineschlachtzeit im Herbst sowas wie ein Dorfkarneval ist. Und dann auch, wie der Isaak — der weiß nämlich noch immer nicht, was los ist — wie der so dasteht, diese Figur, dieses Gesicht! — Lehrer Dyck muß sich erst ein wenig auf die Lippen beißen, ehe er in ganz geschäftsmäßigem Ton sagen kann: „Isaak, nimm dir den Schwanz los." Eine neue Lachsalve er- schallt, als Isaak sich den Schmuck abnimmt und sich da- bei im Kreise dreht wie ein Hund, der sich in die Rute beißen will.

Ph—h—h—u! — macht Hans — das ist noch gut abgelaufen, und sieht dankbar seinen Lehrer an. Den liebt er von nun an noch viel mehr. — Aber Isaak, — der ihn jetzt verwalken wird, denn der weiß natürlich, wer ihm das angetan?

Isaak denkt nicht an Prügeln, tut überhaupt, als ob nichts vorgefallen. Aber als man nach der Pause wie- der in die Klasse trollt, flüstert Marie dem Haus so beim Vorbeigehen ins Ohr: „Jetzt hängt er bei dir."

Hans ist ihr dankbar, denn es wäre ihm doch zu schimpflich gewesen, sich mit dem Schwanz vor der Leh- rerin zu zeigen. Nicht auszudenken. Der Schwanz wan- dert in seine Tasche für spätere Verwendung.

(Aus: **Verloren in der Steppe,** Dritter Teil)

Bible class in the Chaco taught by Mr. and Mrs. W. Hiebert and N. Siemens.

Present high school building in Fernheim.

Physical education class.

Cast of play, "Der Rossdieb."

Cast of play, "Schicksalswinke."

MENNONITE EDUCA

BY

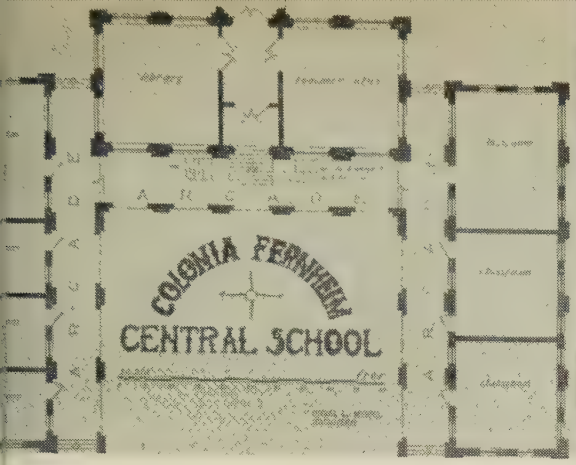
Courageous Beginnings

The story of the rise and growth of Fernheim's educational system reads like a novel. Under very adverse circumstances, in the midst of great poverty, emerged a thorough and fairly well organized school system. Although Paraguay offered these Russian Mennonites no financial aid, it gave them perfect liberty to establish their own schools and employ their own teachers. In the early years some aid was received from Germany and, more recently, from North America. Still, this work of creation was that of their own minds and hands.

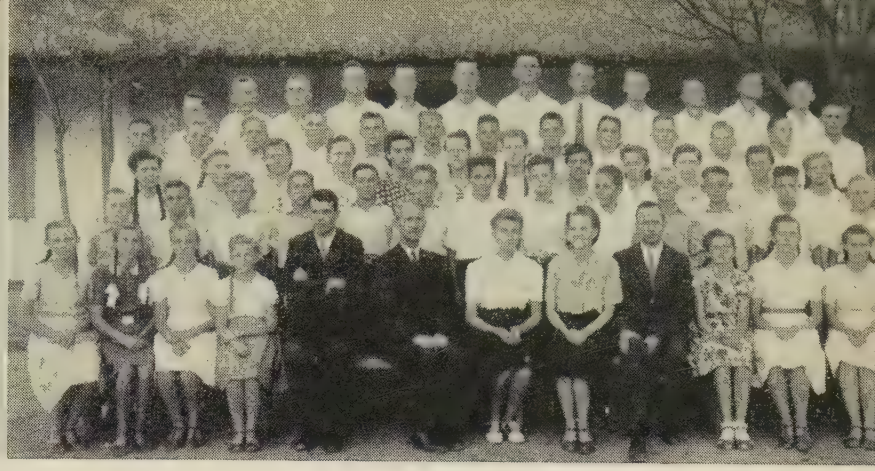
When these 2,038 Fernheimers pitched their tents in the bitter grass of the Chaco, they were entirely isolated and could, therefore, perpetuate their culture as they wished. Their only contenders were the unschooled Chelop and Lengua Indians.

Since, to Mennonites, life without schools was inconceivable, the teachers who were a part of the immigration gathered children under trees and there, sitting on the stumps of the trees which had been cut for the building of their new homes, learning began. The first schoolhouse was erected a year after the beginning of settlement. In the same year a colony high school with

Rail transportation in the Chaco.



Floor plan of new high school building.



High school teachers and students in Chaco, 1946.

HE GRAN CHACO

T

hree teachers was organized. Five years later, in 1936, his school, which had its beginning in Schoenwiese (No. 7), moved to its new quarters in the young town of Philadelphia.

As the colony expands, new and better schools arise. Mud walls and grass roofs are slowly giving way to red, burned bricks and tin roofs. The number of pupils enrolled in the Fernheim school system has increased from 300 in 1933 to 506 in 1946.

The desire of the colonists for more Bible training received expression when N. Siemens, Fernheim printer, gathered fourteen students to begin what was called a *Wanderbibelschule* ("itinerant Bible school"). Since the school had no building of its own, it moved from village to village. After a three weeks' session in one village, it moved on—students and all—to another village. Teachers and students were quartered without charges. The school wandered thus through the colony for about three months of each year. When, in 1942, the enrollment rose to thirty-six students, the necessity of a permanent home became evident. That home has not yet been found, but it is anticipated that the new high-school building will house a strong Bible department.

"Running" water in the Chaco.

Baking bread for students.

Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

Girls volley-ball game.

Teachers

The first teachers were those with Russian background and training. These are now retiring, and out of the new Chaco generation teachers had to be prepared. The first Fernheim-educated teachers began teaching in 1942. Some of these new teachers had received six years of elementary school, four years of high school, and two years of pedagogy. Others assumed their teaching responsibilities with only eight or ten years of education. By 1946, seven out of the total seventeen elementary teachers had been educated in Fernheim. Ten of these are European-trained.

New elementary school, Waldesruh.

In Fernheim, as in the United States, there is a shortage of teachers. The pedagogical school under the direction of Dr. F. Kliewer which operated in 1940-43, has not functioned since Dr. Kliewer left the colony. Thus no new teachers have been educated in recent years. Plans are now under way, however, to resume the teacher-training course.

"Wie geht es?" "Gewaltig!"

Possibilities of securing adequately trained high school teachers is still more difficult than the securing of grade-school teachers, since there are no universities in the Chaco. Of three young men who ventured out to work and study in Asuncion one is now teaching in Friesland, another is a colony worker in Asuncion, and the third is unable to teach due to illness. Another young man, Ernst Harder, who prepared for the ministry and teaching in the United States, has recently returned. Five young people are now studying in the United States, and it is hoped that they will return to build up Fernheim's secondary- and higher education. The Mennonite Central Committee is now furnishing two teachers from the United States for the *Zentralschule,* and another will be added.

Other problems for Fernheim are the Spanish language and Paraguayan certification. Since Paraguay desires that Mennonite schools shall be more and more nationalized, there is an increasing pressure that Spanish be taught in all the schools. As a result, teachers are learning Spanish. In the summer of 1932 ten teachers went to Asuncion to study. Since then several have returned to Asuncion from time to time for this purpose; others have done much through private study.

Fernheim teachers, 1946

Certification is more difficult to secure. Paraguay requires that those wishing a teacher's certificate take all training above the sixth grade in Paraguayan schools; and, since the Fernheim schools are not incorporated into the Paraguayan system, it is exceedingly difficult for a Fernheim student to get credit for schoolwork done in the colony.

Course of Study

The Fernheim course of study has its own pattern and does not follow the Paraguayan system. Of interest might be the fact that Spanish has become an integral

Going to a picnic.

the sub-tropics, the school program has been adjusted to suit this climate. All classes meet in the forenoons, beginning at seven in the morning (in spring, 6:30). The day's program at the *Zentralschule* is as follows:

5:45	a.m.	*Turnen* (Gym)
6:30	a.m.	*Fruestueck* (Breakfast)
7:00	a.m.	*Morgenandacht* (Morning devotions)
7:10-12:00	a.m.	*Unterrichtsstunden* (Hours of instruction)
12:00	Noon	*Mittag* (Dinner)
12:30- 2:30	p.m.	*Siesta* (Noon rest)
2:30- 5.00	p.m.	*Lernen* (Study)
5:00- 6:00	p.m.	*Frei* (Free period)
6:00	p.m.	*Abendbrot* (Supper)
7:00- 9:00	p.m.	*Lernen* (Study)
9:00	p.m.	*Abendschluss* (Evening devotions)

part of the course. Beginning with the third grade, the pupils study Spanish. To this language-course are added Paraguayan geography and history, which are also taught in Spanish. Native officials visit Fernheim schools from time to time to see that their language is being taught, that national hymns are being sung, and that the Mennonites make an effort to become a definite part of this country. In thoroughness, discipline, and scholastic achievement the Mennonite schools excel those of Paraguay. There is, therefore, a constant fear among the colonists that if they accept the state course of study they will lose rather than gain.

Having a good time.

At present, relatively few colonists can speak the Spanish fluently. High school graduates can speak little, but understand most of it.

Recently a new subject has been added to the curriculum: Music theory (*Notenunterricht*). Fernheimers brought the *Ziffern* system ("number system") with them from Russia, and till now all songbooks made here have been with numbers; music instruction has been according to this system. H. H. Flaming's *Textbuch zum Noten-Unterricht* has been introduced into all the schools, and emphasis will now be placed on teaching notes with the hope of eventually introducing the entire colony to the note system.

Zentralschule

There is enough difference between school life in the Chaco and that in North America to make teaching here an interesting experience. Since Fernheim is located in

The high-school course is prescribed. The student has no electives. Only a few new courses are added to the curriculum as he proceeds from grade to grade. As a whole the school follows the European classical pattern. Thoroughness takes precedence over quantity of material covered. For example, if a history teacher covers 150 pages in a three-hour course a year he has done quite well. Since the student has five classes each day, he must prepare five lessons each day. The Fernheim student is, as a rule, far more conscientious in his work than is a typical high school student in the United States. It is taken for granted that he studies all his lessons each day. The teachers at the *Zentralschule* require that a stu-

Ready for the eats.

dent who has not prepared his lesson must come to the teacher before class begins and tell him so. The student has from four to five hours' study-time a day. These hours he must spend in his classroom which is also his study hall. His classroom thus in truth becomes a "home room" since about nine hours a day are spent there. School is in session six days a week for eight months.

Courtesy and discipline are highly treasured virtues. The student is taught to greet every older person respectfully. The boy with a little bow of his head and "Guten Tag," and the girl with a curtsy. When he stands in front of a teacher, he stands at attention. To hold his hands in his pockets shows poor training. When the teacher enters the classroom, the students rise, and rise again when he leaves. Pupils always rise when they are asked to speak or when spoken to; they rise when they are sitting on the lawn and the teacher passes them.

Life at the Zentralschule

Of the sixty-one students now in school, forty-eight live on the campus. Although some villages from which the students come lie in the near vicinity of Philadelphia, students usually stay in school-dormitories to enable them to give their undivided attention to schoolwork. The dormitories are crowded with as many as seven students living in a small room. Besides a bed, and a wall shelf on which to place his tooth brush, cup, story books, etc., he has no furniture. There are no clothes-closets, tables, chairs, or dressers in his room. Since he studies in his classroom, he does little but sleep in his room. His clothes he keeps in a little box, suitcase, or hangs them on nails.

The *Zentralschul-Kueche* ("kitchen") also has its unique features. Frequently one sees students bringing little jars of butter or bottles of syrup to the kitchen. What for? It is his *Aufstrich* ("spread for the bread"). Everyone furnishes his own spread. With forty-eight students eating in the dining-hall, there are all of fifteen varieties of spreads ranging from lard to molasses, and the table is littered with forty-eight kinds of cups and containers. After the meal these are stored in a cupboard. The standing menu for breakfast and supper is bread, spread, and *Prips* (coffee made out of cafir corn) or tea. The main meal is served at noon.

Most of the products for the kitchen are brought in by the parents of the students. A usual order for the parent is: 40 kilo of potatoes, 16 kilo of cafir flour, 4 kilo of peanut oil, 2 chickens, some pumpkins, 1 kilo of *Prips*, and 1 cubic meter of kindling wood. That is a supply for the kitchen for three days. The 48 students eat 14 loaves of bread a day, which are all baked in a Russian oven near the kitchen. The board bill for one student is approximately $65 a year. His entire bill in United States currency is about as follows: Tuition, $15; board, $22; supplies, $3; total, $40 a year.

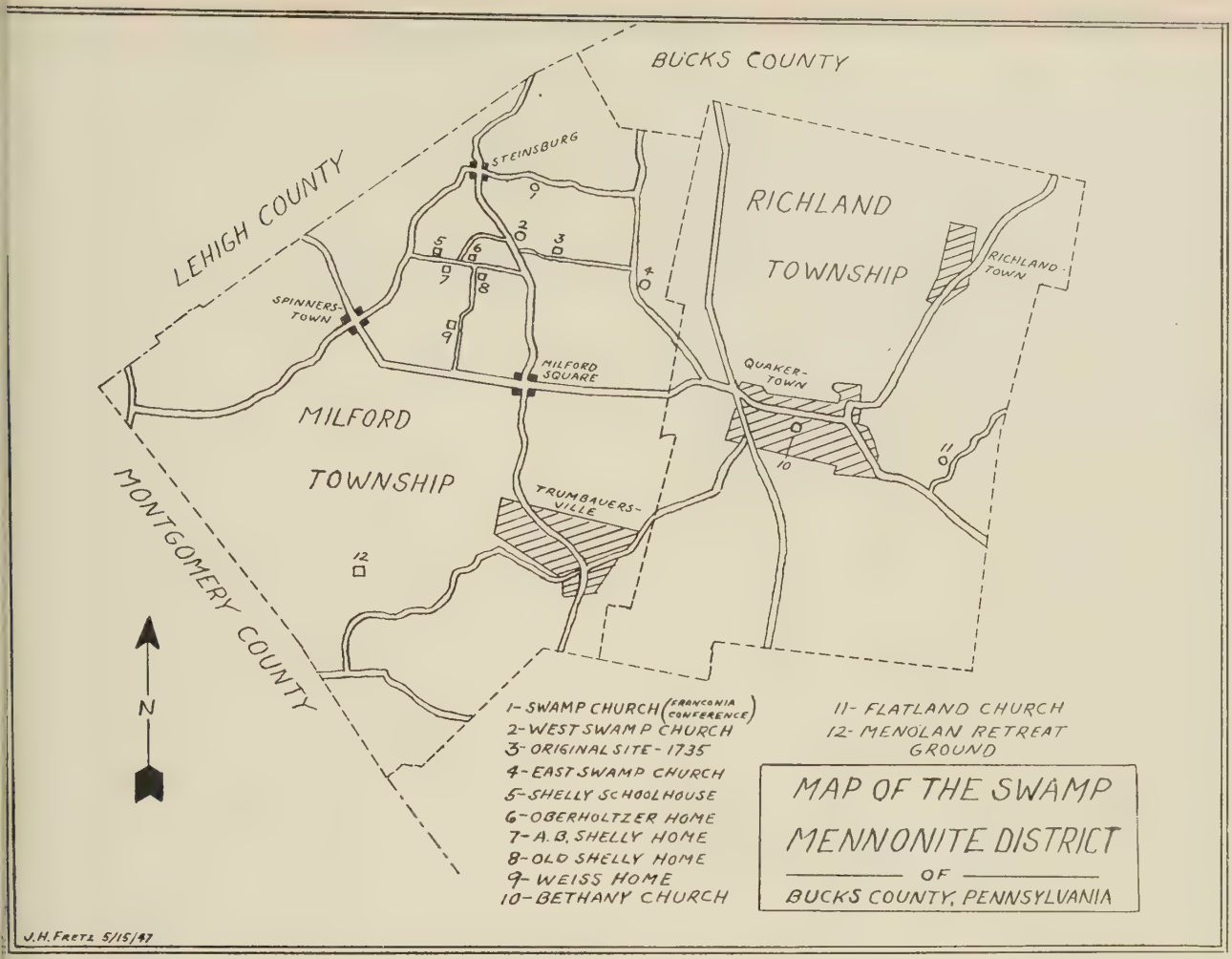
The Fernheim high school student is not burdened with extra-curricular activities, but more with studies. He doesn't have many places to go at nights for the simple reason that there are no places to go to. Moreover nights are for study. Twice or three times a year the school sponsors a *Heimabend* (all-school social). But the glaring lights of big cities, train whistles, cars, and the multitude of attractions so dear to our youth at home are not in his world. He lives and learns in the Chaco. Nature is still his greatest charm, and his closest neighbor, the Indian. The bush, thorny and thick and home of the cactus berry, wild blossoms, bush hen, birds and lizards, is his world; he loves it, and he knows no other. With wild flowers and fresh blossoms from a great variety of trees he often decorates his classroom, especially on the teacher's birthday.

He gets out very little. With the exception of a few short trips to military forts or to the river port, he stays pretty much where he was born. Many of our students have not even seen all the villages of this colony. About half of them have never seen a train, a mountain, a river, a ship, or a passenger car. That does not make him feel slighted, not at all. He feels much more like a young adventurer who has heard of greater worlds beyond and who is always dreaming of more things to see. His world is small since he travels only by foot, horseback, or buggy. But this is a happy youth, and if you ask them how they like it, they will answer, *"Gewaltig"!* ("Mighty fine!").

Future

Soon the *Zentralschule* will be housed in a new, large building. Its present quarters are entirely inadequate, and for years it has been the dream of the colony and friends in the United States to erect a better educational plant. This new building will provide for a community library, a teachers' office, seven classrooms, and an auditorium. In addition to the high school course there will be added a two-year teacher-training course, and a Bible school. Upon this school the colony depends for its trained leadership. Its responsibilities are heavy and its possibilities boundless. May Christians pray that this school of their brothers may ever be guided by the principles and spirit of the Great Teacher.

After receiving her training in Odessa and fleeing Russia, Miss Braeuel has just arrived with a refugee group in the Chaco and has now joined the faculty of the *Zentralschule*.



A PENNSYLVANIA MENNONITE CHURCH -- WEST SWAMP

BY J. HERBERT FRETZ

WITHIN our present knowledge, 1717 is the earliest date one can associate with the Mennonites of the Great Swamp Region of Upper Bucks County, in Pennsylvania. For in that year Valentine (Felty) Clemmer, a Mennonite elder from the Palatinate area of Southern Germany, came via Philadelphia and settled in this region, and in all probability, was accompanied by a goodly number of Mennonite immigrant families. At least by 1725, when Clemmer's name appears at the First Mennonite Conference as the representative from Great Swamp, we can be certain that organized worship was being conducted in the homes of this community as was the early custom.

During the 1720's and 1730's Mennonites continued to immigrate into this section. Some remained in the immediate Swamp area, others pushed beyond to the northwest some ten miles and soon formed the Upper Milford Congregation, while still others moved north a similar distance along the old Bethlehem Road and formed the Saucon Congregation. About this time or a little later, to the northeast of Saucon, Mennonites settled in Springfield Township. All three of these congregations were extensions of the Swamp settlement, being one district until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The first meetinghouse in the Swamp settlement was probably erected in 1735 on lowlands, donated by William Allen, a large colonial landowner in eastern Pennsylvania. This building, likely built of logs, served both as a meetinghouse and schoolhouse. In 1743, Jacob Musselman purchased land from Allen which evidently included this meetinghouse tract. In light of this and the lack of any deed, it is certain the land on which this first meetinghouse stood was never owned by the congregation. Perhaps for that reason there was no adjoining graveyard here. All burials at this time were made in a plot one mile to the east on higher ground. About 1771, for some unknown reason, another meetinghouse was built on this latter graveyard site which soon came to be known as East Swamp, while the original meeting place received the name West Swamp, both remaining one congregation until about 1876. The present Swamp congregation is now using the third

Memorial marker of first church in Great Swamp Region, Pennsylvania.

building on this site, constructed in 1850. This building, however, was enlarged and extensively remodeled in 1936.

On January 18, 1790, Michael Musselman deeded 80 perches of land, about one-half mile west from the original West Swamp site, to Peter Zetty, Christian Hunsberger, and Michael Shelly, "elders or overseers of the Mennonite congregation . . . . for a church and graveyard." The first meetinghouse was then dismantled, removed to the new site located on a pleasing knoll along the old Allentown Road, and there rebuilt. In 1819, a larger stone building, also used for school purposes, replaced this first meetinghouse, and in 1839 a separate schoolhouse was built several hundred yards to the south, possibly at the corner of the Brick Tavern Road. For the convenience of distant members, the Flatland Meetinghouse was built in 1837, about two miles east of East Swamp in Richland Township. Today this is the home of the small but thriving Flatland Congregation.

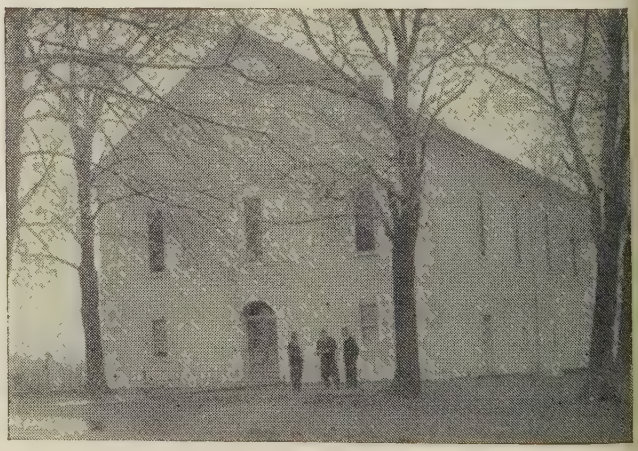
The following men are known to have served the West Swamp Congregation as ministers: Valentine Clemmer served from about 1717 until the unknown date of his death. This, however, must have been about 1763, for in that year, Jacob Meyer, a minister from Saucon, was ordained bishop of the district, evidently replacing Clemmer. The next minister, Jacob Musselman, immigrating in 1743, was either a minister when he arrived or soon became one. The date of his death is also unknown, but his son Michael was already serving as minister in 1733. Jacob Nold was ordained in 1794 and preached until 1817 when he moved to Columbiana County, Ohio, becoming the first resident Mennonite bishop in that state. Samuel Musselman, the son of Michael, ordained in 1808, served until his death in September, 1847. Little is known of Christian Bliem, who served from 1814 until 1831, and Christian Zetty, who served from 1817 until 1843. Jacob Hiestand was ordained in 1832 but moved to Doylestown in 1842.

The Old Gospel and New Methods

It was probably on the removal of Hiestand that John H. Oberholtzer was ordained in the same year. This energetic and gifted young man of thirty-three years, who already had distinguished himself as an able schoolteacher and skillful locksmith, now dilligently applied himself to the calling of God into the ministry. The occasion of his first sermon, as recorded by A. B. Shelly, is singularly expressive of the vigor and piety of his whole life:

> Soon after his installation as a Gospel minister he one Sunday morning was quite unexpectedly called upon to preach his first sermon. He in after years would repeatedly tell of the feelings he experienced in thus being called upon to preach without having made any special preparation to do so. During the opening prayer he quietly but earnestly wrestled with the Lord, imploring His grace and assistance. While thus engaged in silent prayer, the Lord graciously heard him and answered his prayer by reminding him of the words spoken to His servant Joshua, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." (Jos. 1:5) This gave him courage not only for the time being but at many a time and during many a conflict thereafter. He selected for his text, Ephesians 2:8,9 and spoke of the free grace of God unto salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This his first text and first sermon formed the keynote of all his subsequent preaching. He knew nothing but Christ and Him crucified as the means of our salvation from sin and the judgment to come.

West Swamp Meetinghouse, erected 1873. Road in foreground leads to Milford Square.



Coupled with this zeal for the Gospel were new ethods which the majority of his ministering brethren id not share. Unlike those who clung to old and oftmes outworn methods, the farsighted Oberholtzer nared with the religious pioneers of his day the new iterest in Christian education, Sunday schools, misions, and publication work. It was not a question of a ew theology but of new methods. In line with this ame Oberholtzer's push for a clear and definite, written hurch policy to replace the old and undefinite unwritten church rules." A very interesting German manuscript f six pages, bound in several leaves of an old German ewspaper, remains today in the custody of the West wamp Congregation. It is a congregational constitution or the "Western Part of the United Swamp Mennonite Congregation," written in what appears to be the eautiful script of Oberholtzer himself. The twentyne rules, governing only the temporal affairs of the ongregation and its trustees, nevertheless reveals a careul and wise authorship. Above all it is striking to note he date of its acceptance—March 25, 1844! Thus early n his ministry, even under the old Bishop Samuel Musselman, whose feeble signature is found among the igners, Oberholtzer and similarly minded brethren were ntroducing their new concept of a definite and efficient hurch organization. This congregational constitution—robably the first of its kind among the Mennonites of America—is followed by the signatures of fifty-three men (eighteen of which are Shellys!). They likely represent the active male members of the congregation at that ime.

This desire for a written church policy finally induced Oberholtzer, early in 1847, to propose such a document to the Franconia Conference. This proposal, together with his earlier refusal to wear the clerical coat, finally occasioned the division of October, 1847. For some time preceding the division, there must have been unrest in the Swamp Congregations, particularly West Swamp. Early in 1847, evidently about the time Oberholtzer wrote his constitution, he was chosen

Russell Weiss' grocery store in Milford Square—a crossroads village of the Swamp district.

Clarence Weiss farm, in this Mennonite family for several generations.

bishop to replace old Samuel Musselman. It was probably also at this time that Willam N. Shelly was chosen as the other minister. Shelly, at first an enthusiastic supporter of Oberholtzer's ideas, later joined the Evangelical Mennonites in 1858 and became an early leader of that group. Oberholtzer's new office of authority and Shelly as the new minister must not have altogether satisfied the conservative brethren at West Swamp. As is usual in such circumstances, there were unpleasant incidents on both sides. About this time, at least prior to the October division, a small group left West Swamp and started to build the present Swamp meetinghouse, which remained in the old Conference at the time of the division.

John Oberholtzer's new methods of presenting the old Gospel, which later did much to mold the General Conference, were first pioneered in the Swamp congregations, particularly West Swamp. By 1847, Oberholtzer had begun children's instruction classes known as *Kinder-Lehre,* which were held on Sunday afternoons. These meetings consisted of a great deal of singing, of prayer, and of reading and explaining the catechism which Oberholtzer had found to his needs and which became the basis of our present General Conference catechism. About 1854 he printed a broadside of sixteen hymns for the young baptismal candidates of his district. These hymns cover the whole period of Bible history, from creation to eternal life, and were probably of his own composition. These pioneer ventures among children led on to the establishment on May 2, 1858, of what is believed to be the first fullfledged Mennonite Sunday school in Eastern Pennsylvania. To the present day the West Swamp Sunday school has continued as a blessed and powerful influence in the work of the Lord. A complete set of records has been preserved from the beginning.

The West Swamp has pioneered in other Christian causes. On October 26, 1850, the ministers and deacons of this congregation drew up a written plan for the aid of "poor and suffering members of the Christian Community." Such aid was a well-established

Mennonite practice, but now in the form of a definite, well-laid plan to raise the monies and to administer them was something new. This small but carefully written manuscript of less than two pages, again resembling the hand of Oberholtzer, still remains among the congregational papers.

Andrew B. Shelly

By the year 1864, Oberholtzer's ever-widening interests in the church at large were proving too much for him conscientiously to minister to the needs of his own congregation. In that year, to assist him, the congregation chose from its number, Andrew B. Shelly, a gifted young man now thirty years of age. Shelly had early in life manifested unusual mental gifts and had been called, in addition to his farming, to teach public school. In 1858 Shelly had been chosen as the first superintendent of the new Sunday school, serving well until his ministerial calling. On Good Friday, March 25, 1864, when the nation was feeling the bitter pangs of Civil War, the Swamp people peacefully gathered and witnessed Father Oberholtzer and Christian Clemmer, of Hereford, ordain young Shelly. Two days later, on Easter morning, A. B. Shelly preached his first sermon from Luke 24:26. To realize the gifts and the greatness of these two men—Oberholtzer and Shelly—who, although of different temperaments, worked side by side for thirty years, is to account for much of what the West Swamp Congregation, the Eastern District Conference, and the General Conference is today. Both were men of deep-rooted convictions, faithfully living and preaching the Word of God; yet Oberholtzer was the warrior and Shelly, the shepherd. It took a stern Oberholtzer to pioneer the foundation and a wise Shelly, who for twenty years served as president, to build thereon. Yet to speak of them only in such formal terms is to do injustice to the richness of their personalities. Anyone who visits the eastern congregations today and perchance mentions their names will observe the faces of the older members broaden into a knowing smile and from them hear happy memories of "the beloved A. B." or an amusing anecdote from the life of "der alte John." As Oberholtzer began to age, A. B. Shelly stepped forward in the work. On August 22, 1872, the latter was ordained into the full ministry or eldership, in which position he served until his death on December 26, 1913. It is safe to say, that Oberholtzer and Shelly, more than any other eastern leaders of their time, influenced the formation of our present General Conference.

The time had now come when the old 1819 meetinghouse was no longer adequate for the congregation and the ever-growing Sunday school. On April 13, 1872, a special meeting was held to discuss the erection of a new meetinghouse. The first motion passed, finally gave direction to the business before them: "Resolved, that the need of a new meetinghouse is hereby recognized and that we will attempt . . . . to build it during the summer of 1873." The second motion, calling for a "basement" in the new house, was revolutionary in Mennonite architecture. At least in Pennsylvania, as far as the author knows, all meetinghouses up to this date had been low, one-story structures. In this new building the lower story was to be used for Sunday school purposes and the upper story for worship.

Umfrage

On Wednesday morning, May 20, Ascension Day, the congregation met. From the minutes we gather this to be one of the meetings regularly held before each spring and fall Communion, an *Umfrage* or inquiry meeting, at which time any public confessions of wrongdoing or any grievances against a brother were to be aired and adjusted. Let us turn back the years and attend this interesting meeting as silent visitors. First, Father Oberholtzer opens the meeting by announcing a hymn. Next, A. B. Shelly leads in prayer. In his characteristic fervor, Oberholtzer gives an "impressive opening speech," calling for vigilance and warning against trouble *(drang)* in the congregation. *Vorsteher* Peter Sell, next in order, reporting on the *Umfrage* of the congregation, states that no complaints have been made. The use of choral songs in the Sunday school is then discussed and is vigorously defended by John Oberholtzer. The building issue is finally discussed at length, and plans are formulated. The congregation then decides that Abraham Clemmer's wife, a non-member, can take communion with the congregation and with this the meeting is closed.

With a new and large meetinghouse, it was small wonder that the West Swamp people invited the Seventh General Conference in 1875. At this session, definite action toward mission work was first undertaken. It was then, also, when the unfortunate Wadsworth School's troubles caused great anxiety and led to four days of extra sessions.

One notices several interesting items as one scans the West Swamp minutes of the late nineteenth century. Until 1881, public confessions are mentioned as taking place at the *Umfrage* meetings. Other items include the maintenance of an adequate Alms Fund for the needy, the care of a 99-year-old widow, monies collected for the Wadsworth School, annual collections for paying the minister, payment of a horse and buggy for the song leader, and the formal incorporation of the congregation in 1890.

Last Days of J. H. Oberholtzer

In 1888, we find in both East and West Swamp minutes, that old Father Oberholtzer, now in his eightieth year, rose at the close of the meetings and asked to be fully relieved of all his duties. In the words of the

ast Swamp secretary, "He felt the weight of his ghty years and thought that the burden—borne willgly and gladly thus far—should be taken from his ioulders and placed upon younger ones."

Although, after 1872, A. B. Shelly was in charge of ie work, Oberholtzer's heart and love was still in ie work and he willingly assisted Shelly at all times. ı 1872 he had married again and moved to Philadelnia, where he remained for some years. But the ıronging city life proved too much for the aged, ountry-lover, far from his people. About 1878 he reırned to spend his last years among the people he ved. At first he lived in Milford Square. Later he ayed with his daughter in Perkasie, Samuel Roth's, ear the meetinghouse; and finally with William andis' at Center Valley. God graciously allowed Faıer Oberholtzer to rest thus in the twilight years of is life and behold the countless fruits of his labors. ften when Shelly was away Father Oberholtzer would reach for him. Even more common was Shelly's custom f asking Oberholtzer to conduct the opening part of ie service. When he had done this, he would step own and take a chair to one side of the pulpit, usually ilting it back slightly against the wall. Here, with is eyes closed he would follow the sermon. Seward Rosenberger, remembers that on one occasion Shelly elt that the aged brother must have fallen asleep, nd pausing in his sermon, said, "*Will ihn jemand ecken?*" fearing he would fall. "*O, nein,*" replied Oberoltzer, "*das its nicht noetig. Ich bin andaechtig ufmerksam!*"

Aging and more infirm, John Oberholtzer began o weaken physically. Yet the powers of his vigorous pirit had not slackened. Thus, at a ministerial meetng held at Deep Run on January 21, 1890, he still howed his valiant spirit. It was at the end of the neeting that Father Oberholtzer, a silent listener during he program, was asked to say a few words. The ecretary wrote: "Our hearts were warmed by his emarks, and began to burn with heavenly fire when pon the announcement of the grand old hymn '*Nun Danket Alle Gott!*' the aged brother advanced to the rgan and led the music without even a note before him."

His last days were spent at the home of his niece, Mrs. William Landis, near the Saucon Meetinghouse, ow the home of Amanda Beck, a daughter of William Landis. Here he died on February 15, 1895.

The Last Fifty Years

A. B. Shelly continued as the only minister of the Swamp congregations until the beginning of the Quakertown Congregation in 1898, when an assistant was sugested to help him. It was not until 1901 when Harey S. Gottschall, of Schwenksville, a gifted grandson of ld preacher Moses Gottschall, was chosen to assist Shelly. He served until 1904. During the year 1907, Warren S. Shelly, of Bethlehem, preached regularly at the afternoon services at West Swamp. From 1908 until 1914, Elwood S. Shelly, a son of the congregation was called and faithfully assisted the aged Father Shelly.

During 1914, West Swamp was without a regular minister. In January, 1915, Harvey G. Allbach, of Schwenksville, another grandson of Moses Gottschall, a university graduate and former editor of *The Mennonite,* accepted a call and served through several sieges of weakened health until his untimely death in 1921. From 1922 until February, 1925, Peter E. Frantz was minister. Seward M. Rosenberger, a son of the congregation, was called in July, 1925, and wholeheartedly served until 1929. His son, Arthur S. Rosenberger, succeeded his father from 1930 until October, 1934. The present minister, Andrew J. Neuenschwander, a native of Berne, Indiana, and secretary of the General Conference Home Mission Board, began his ministry at West Swamp in 1934.

Much credit is due capable song leaders who have maintained West Swamp's reputation in the Conference for good singing. N. B. Grubb relates how old Moses Gottschall often used to say, "*Wie doch die Schwammer singen!*" Oberholtzer and A. B. Shelly were both good singers, and the latter, in his younger days, held singing schools in the community. West Swamp was the first General Conference congregation and possibly the first American Mennonite congregation to use a musical instrument—and a pipe organ at that! On Sunday, November 7, 1874, a new organ was dedicated which had been made locally by Charles Durner, of Quakertown, at the then enormous cost of $450. Soon after this other Eastern District congregations began to install organs, usually of the reed type, in their meetinghouses. This original hand-powered West Swamp organ was in constant use until about November, 1937, when the present pipe organ was installed.

All meetings were in German until 1895 when, on every fourth Sunday, English was used. In 1907, every other service was changed to English, and from 1918 until about 1925, German was still used for one meeting a month. Pennsylvania German, however, still remains in common use, even among many of the younger generation. The Pennsylvania German folkways, coupled with the traditions of Pennsylvania Mennonitism, to a large extent, color the attitudes and characteristics of these people. Such "conservative" tendencies are so often misunderstood or unappreciated by strangers or some who zealously desire to live "only by the Gospel" and who then thoughtlessly cast aside anything that smacks of "human tradition," falsely so-called. To do so is vainly to assume that God has spoken only to us, not to our fathers! Yet in harmony with this historical background, there must always be a warm and living faith and an active desire to proclaim the old Gospel in new ways. Such piety and warm missionary spirit also characterizes West Swamp.

Pennsylfawnish Deitsch

BY JOHN H. OBERHOLTZER

(Published in Das Christliche Volksblatt, September 3rd, 1862.)

A. Well, B., wie geht es als bei Dir?

B. O, so midling.

A. Ich hab schun lang mol zu Dir kumma wolla, um mol mit Dir zu schwaetze wega allerhand Sacha, wies alleweil in der Welt zugeht.

B. Ei ja, da kummst Du mer just recht; ich bin a so voll, dass ich schier net wes wu mer der Kop steht.

A. Drum bin ich so frueh den Morja zu Dir kumma, und hab gedenkt mer deta heit da ganza Dak d'zu nemma, weil ich a schir ke Auskummas me wes; un wammer alsomal n'anner so sei Elend klagt—dno werts em doch of a bissel leichter.

B. O ja, sell hab ich a schun oft auskfunna.

A. Sin dei Leit doch all ksund?

B. Ja, mer haette wege Sellem nix zu klage. Del vun da Buwa sin am pluga, und die annara sinn im Schwamm am meha, un die Maed sin noch a bissel am Eppelschnitza, bis d's Kras drucka wert; dno wolla sie ans Recha. Ich hab just a mer do en alter Recha z'recht macha wolla, far so bisle an der Fens rum zu recha, um's Kras a helfa bissel ausnanner zu starra; un die zwe Klena sin hinri in's Darnafeld a wenig Blackbera z'hola far etlicha Bleckbeerabei. Ich gleich selli sort Bai schier bisli besser wie eniga annara Bai, das mer backa kann. O, ich haet jo shier vergessa zu froga, wie Dei Leit als a kumma.

A. Well mer 'in a ziemlich ksund, un sin a als a wenig an der Erwet. Mei Grosser is heit mit der Fuhr uf den Racksberk kfara far a wenig Plattasteh zu hola far mei Hof z'belega, s' wert als fruehjohrs un spotjahrs so dreckig um mei Haus rum. Mei Alti krummelt schier allamol als, wann sie so im Drecke rum dappa muss; ich hab awer k'denkt ich wol dem K'krummel 'n End macha, un wol Plattasteh im Hof rum lega.

B. O sell is gut. Ich hab in meim Hof schun lang so Steh rum klegt, vorher, wenn als manchmal ens hin kschlaga is, dann is mer allamol im Dreck gelega; nau sterzt mer doch just uf die Steh.—Paar fun da annara Buwa sin am Mist sprea. Mer muss ewa, denk ich doch nochamal Saea. Awer—der Hund moecht's bal hola—verleicht kumma die Suedlicha noch un verderwa em noch Alles; mei Dicker is nunner ans Stoffels, gucka, was se alleweil im Stoh far Butter un Krumbeera gewa. Viel Gelt kammer ewa allaweil net macha, 's'holt alles net viel un was mer krikt, is schier lauter Lumpa Geld und no net viel dafun. Unser Kleini hot ebbes vun der Summer Kumplen kat, awer sis a wider besser. Mei Fra hot kment sie wot a mit kumma, euch mol zu b'sucha, awer sie hot 'm Fraenk sei hossa flicka muessa. Sie kummt awer a bald mol, denk ich.

Mennonites in Fiction

(Continued from page 23)

silly creature. You silly, silly creature!" (p. 450); and into a remark by Peter is inserted: "Oh, the insolence, the insolence!" (p. 453)

It is apparent that the author is determined to present man's inhumanity toward his fellow-man, regardless of the distress and suffering that may result. Unfortunately, that attitude is all too prevalent in the world; but I can think of several communities in this country that would lend themselves to that purpose better than a Mennonite one. If the village of Blumenhof was located south of Hoffnungstal and Gnadenau, it must have been very far south. One might readily be induced to assume that the author had intended to furnish such evangelists as his own Brunstalt with illustrative material for a rousing hell-fire-and-brimstone revival sermon.

As far as I recall, Gnadenau and Hoffnungsthal were not idyllic; there were some hardships and irregularities; but the members of these communities did not in those years try to get the land away from each other; instead they often aided each other quite generously in times of distress. I do not recall a prototype of the land-grabbing Craftholt, nor did the leaders have the devious proclivities so conspicuous with those of Blumenhof. So I naturally still prefer Gnadenau and Hoffnungsthal.

The Locusts

The basic plot of *The Locusts* by Otto Schrag (Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1943), presents the life cycle of the grasshoppers, under the chapter heads: "They Come to Life," "They Wander East," "They Settle, They Die," with a final chapter, "But Men Live Forever." They emerge in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, then travel eastward in huge, shimmering clouds, and finally settle in central Kansas where they also die. Whether the detailed information concerning the life-history of the locusts, their internal and external structure, and their reactions to such disturbances as noise, fire, and smoke, is accurate, I am not prepared to say, since my *Einfuehlungsvermoegen* is limited.

As the *Gegenspieler* of those locusts are seven different groups of people, scattered "before the story starts" over the large area comprising Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming, and Idaho. In the course of the novel, representatives of all of these groups are gradually and quite skillfully brought together in the village of Gnadenau, and their different attitudes and responses to the locust plague are demonstrated.

The geography of the novel is generally vague and sometimes very startling. Gnadenau is placed in a valley, apparently in McPherson County. The only Gnadenau I know is located in Marion County and at least a mile north of Cottonwood Creek. Heinrich Bieber, living near Gnadenau, does his shopping in Atchison and can

(Continued on page 46.)

THE MENNONITE WAY OF LIFE IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE

BY PAUL R. SHELLY

From its origin in 1847 up to 1870, the East Pennsylania Conference of the Mennonite Church was attempting to maintain the Mennonite way of life by using the methods of the Old Mennonite Franconia Conference, but, at the same time, began to face issues with new methods. It is not known to what extent the leaders deliberately planned this twofold approach, but it is clear to one who reads the records that both of these attitudes were held. The significant fact here is that by about 1870 the Conference emerged with a method which was to distinguish it from the Franconia Conference.

Methods of Maintaining the Way of Life

In many ways the Eastern District Conference continued to be like the Franconia Conference during this era. Instead of issues on the cut of a coat, a constitution, and the keeping of minutes, other issues appeared. The approach taken was the same, however; and the person who deviated from the accepted norm was excommunicated from the group. In 1851, Abraham Hunsicker, Henry Hunsicker, and Israel Beidler were excommunicated. In 1857, the problem of prayer meetings as special church appointments came to a climax. Because of this, William Rehman and twenty-two others left the Conference and organized a separate church in Zionsville in 1858. This was the beginning of the "Evangelical Mennonites."

It is interesting to note that in this same period a new practice was emerging. The new approach was to have the Conference become an advisory organization and to give almost all of the responsibility for taking action on issues to the individual congregation. One example of this new approach is the attitude of the Conference towards members in secret societies. At the May conference, in 1850, refraining from membership in secret societies was a test for membership. Later, this matter was left to the individual consciences of the ministers and their congregations.

The new approach mentioned above became more and more clear after 1870, until the Eastern District Conference actually cast aside the old mold of the Franconia Conference and created a new one. The process from one to the other was gradual, and possibly no one was completely aware of what was taking place.

A second factor that should be mentioned is that, with but a few exceptions, the Eastern District Conference followed its members to the larger towns; and cities began to open missions. In some cases flourishing congregations were established in these places. Thus, it was decided at a conference session in 1866 that a congregation be formed by the Mennonites who were meeting together in Philadelphia. By 1876 the church had 55 members and 299 in Sunday school. Services were begun in Souderton in 1887, in Allentown and Quakertown in 1894, and the informal group in Lansdale was organized as a congregation in 1930.

The Eastern District Conference has always been ready to adopt new organizations such as Sunday schools, choirs, Junior-, Intermediate,-, and Senior Christian Endeavor societies, young people's fellowships, women's organizations, men's brotherhoods, summer Bible schools, annual meetings of both the Sunday School Union and the Christian Endeavor Union, Scout troops; and retreats. In each case these organizations entered the life of the Eastern District Conference early.

An Evaluation of the Methods

The Method of Church Government.—In the history of the Eastern District Conference the method of church government has been to allow each individual church to choose its own course of action. Ultimately this means that each individual person can act according to the dictates of his own conscience. Thus, while practically all of the official statements of the Conference are in keeping with the basic tenets of the Mennonite faith, the practice of the members has fallen short of this goal.

It is well to have an appraisal of the method of church government used by the Eastern District Conference. There have been a number of good results which grew out of this system. (1) It made possible strong, dynamic Christians who have developed their inner resources through a personal Christian experience and have practiced the Christian ethic, not because of any outer compulsion but because of their inner experience with God through Christ. (2) It has permitted changes to appear early in the way of new organizations and new innovations. There was no need to wait until all churches were ready for these new organizations, and, consequently, they appeared earlier in some churches than in others.

These positive results have been significant in the history of the Eastern District Conference, but a number of weaknesses also arose out of this type of church government. Not all of these weaknesses are inherent in this type of church government; but, at any rate, they are evident as one studies the history of the Eastern District Conference.

In the first place it has not maintained the Biblical position on non-resistance. The Eastern District Conference has had very few members take either the 1 A-O position or the 4-E position in the recent war.

In the second place, it has not succeeded in maintaining non-conformity to the world. In actual practice the conference has taken the same approach here as to other issues. Its statements of policy are in accord with the Biblical position but in practice the individual conscience decides.

The Use of Organizations.—I have already pointed out the fact that the Eastern District Conference has used many of the Protestant organizations.

There have been a number of good results that have grown out of this system of the use of organizations by the Eastern District Conference. (1) Auxiliary organizations have given a large number of the people a place in the life of the church. The organizations of the Eastern District Conference have helped to accomplish this end. (2) Organizations have helped to develop strong leaders and strong Christians. Both the Sunday schools and the Christian Endeavor societies have Conference organizations with annual meetings so that leadership is needed for both the local and the Conference groups. (3) Some of the organizations have been used to maintain distinctive doctrines. All of them have been used to some extent for this purpose. The Men's Brotherhood, patricularly, has been utilized this way. Many of the subjects discussed by the Brotherhood are on our distinctive doctrines.

There have been two main weaknesses in the way the Eastern District Conference has used the organizations. The first is that the General Conference has not provided its own materials for its organizations to any great extent. The first English quarterly for adults was published in 1926. An intermediate quarterly was published for the first time in 1938 and continued through the third quarter in 1943. This same problem is noticed in the Christian Endeavor societies. Practically all of the Christian Endeavor societies use the regular Christian Endeavor topics. However, for an interpretation of these topics to be used in the regular Christian Endeavor meetings eight different sources are used. The General Conference does not provide for its own materials at the present time for the Christian Endeavor societies.

A second fact is important. In the use of organizations by the Conference as a whole, no over-all program is followed. Two examples of this will be given. In the senior retreats between 1928 to 1943 there was no consistency in the program, with but few exceptions. Thus, in only a few of these years was there any definite course on Mennonite history or doctrine. The leadership has changed from year to year, and the type of program offered has been determined to a large extent by the outlook of the leaders. This same tendency has characterized the Christian Endeavor conventions between 1932 and 1943. There was little continuity in the type of speakers that were secured for these conventions. Again, it seemed that the personality and outlook of the leader at the time determined the kind of speaker that was secured. Thus, these organizations were not used as a means of maintaining a distinctive way of life to as great an extent as they might have been.

Separation.—The Eastern District Conference has co-operated with other groups to a large extent and yet, for the most part, not indiscriminately. It has always been interested in co-operating with other Mennonites. It was active in the organization of the General Conference, which had as its original purpose the uniting of all like-minded Mennonites.

The Eastern District Conference, together with the Mennonite General Conference as a whole, has co-operated with the All-Mennonite Convention movement during its existence from 1913 to 1936.

The Eastern District Conference has also co-operated with churches of other denominations in local communities. The extent of this cooperation is again determined by each local church. In 1943, there were 13 out of the 22 churches that had Christian Endeavor societies which were not affiliated with branch or county Christian Endeavor organizations. Since 1932, the Eastern District Conference has been a member of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

It is probably in the realm of separation from society that some of the Eastern District Conference churches differ most from other groups of Mennonites in the use of the method of separation. Here, as in other areas of life, the individual conscience decides to a large extent.

A number of good points in the system as used by the Eastern District Conference must be pointed out. (1) Co-operation has helped to influence others to some extent. Some of our leaders and members have been used to help influence larger groups by participating in them. (2) The Eastern District Conference has been helped by co-operating with like-minded groups. This has certainly been true in the joint meetings between the Friends, Schwenkfelders, Brethren, or Mennonites which have been held since 1931. This has also been true in the Civilian Public Service program. (3) Co-operation has helped the members to appreciate their own group. As they co-operated with others, they saw their own group in a large perspective and quite often came back to their own group stronger than before. (4) Co-operation has helped the members to have a vision of the total Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This has been true in a number of the interdenominational ventures.

Some weaknesses of this system must also be mentioned. (1) In some cases the Eastern District Conference has been influenced by the groups with which it participated. It has, in too many cases, become an echo of the other churches rather than a voice. I do not believe that this is an inherent weakness in co-operation. However, in the experience of the Eastern District Conference, this has been too much the case. (2) The lack of stress of separation from the world has lowered the ideals and standards of the group. Thus, in too much of life, many of the members have become like the rest of society. This is not uniformly true, for there are exceptions in every church; and there are also some churches where separation is stressed more than in others.

ıe Jansen ranch near Berdiansk, Russia, where young Peter Jansen learned ranching. Winter scene shows the old Russian shepherd and his dogs, with feedstacks and windmill in left background.

PETER JANSEN--PIONEER, LEADER AND PHILANTHROPIST

BY CORNELIUS J. CLAASSEN

CORNELIUS JANSEN, the father of Peter Jansen, was born in Tiegenhof, near Danzig, West Prussia, in 1822. About the time of the great westward rek of covered wagons towards California, Cornelius ansen also undertook a journey as long and troublesome, not as dangerous, when he decided to join the Mennone colony in South Russia.

Here Cornelius Jansen came to engage in the grain-xport business in the seaport of Berdiansk, on the Sea f Azov, a city of 25,000 population, renamed "Osipenko" y the Soviets; and here on March 21, 1852, Peter Jansen vas born.

Cornelius Jansen was made Prussian Consul. In the ouse next door lived the British Consul, and from the atter Peter Jansen gathered a smattering of the English anguage, little thinking, at the time, that it would subequently become the language in which he thought and vorked and wrote. The family prospered. They leased large ranch about thirty miles from the city, and here Peter learned a great deal about cattle and sheep, spending much of his time in the saddle from the age of fourteen onwards.

In 1870 the Russian government broke the covenant made by Empress Catherine and ordained that henceforth the sons of the Mennonites would be subject to conscription. The elder Jansen advised his friends to sell their lands and seek a new home in America, where they might again be free to live according to their principles. This advice brought down upon him the wrath of the Russian officials, and he was ordered to leave the country.

Visiting in Germany and England on the way, the Jansen family finally arrived in Quebec August 28, 1873. An old report has it that with their forty-seven pieces of baggage, trunks, and traveling boxes deposited on the station platform, they looked for all the world like a show-troupe on tour. Leaving the rest of the family in Berlin, Ontario, Peter and his father went to New York and Philadelphia, established communication with their Russian friends, and were commissioned to visit the west and look over the various states and territories in which good land was to be had at low prices.

Cornelius Jansen family, South Russia, about 1870. Peter on extreme left.

Through the influence of the American Quakers the Jansens were taken to Washington and introduced to President Grant, who was much interested in the proposed immigration of the Mennonites. Peter Jansen, accustomed to the glittering pomp of Russian officialdom, was greatly surprised to find the White House portals guarded only by a single colored man without even a sword to rattle.

Shortly, Peter and his father left for the West, accompanied by some of the railroad land-commissioners, who were as much interested as had been the Prussian Kings and Catherine in securing the settlement of Mennonite colonies on their lands. The Jansens traveled through Northern Iowa, Minnesota, the then Territory of Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas; found good lands at many points; and eventually Mennonite settlements were established in all of them.

In the meantime, the first party of the friends from Russia had arrived, and the Jansens met them in New York. Because of his knowledge of English, as well as of the lands which he and his father had inspected, Peter was appointed to lead a delegation of the men of the new party back to the west, where the choice of a location for a settlement had narrowed down to two tracts of about twenty-thousand acres each, one in Butler County, Kansas, the other in Jefferson County, Nebraska.

Eventually the Jefferson County land was decided upon. For his own family Peter bought 1,280 acres eighteen miles west of Beatrice, which was then a village of probably fifty houses. He paid an average price of $3.75 an acre.

Soon the rest of the family moved west, the elder Jansens taking a home in Beatrice while the building of a ranch-house on the new property was begun.

In the beginning the Jansens raised sheep. Peter went to Wisconsin for his ewes and to New York state for the rams. Accustomed to raising sheep on the nutritious grasses of the Russian steppes, they assumed that prairie hay would serve the same purpose as a fattening fodder. However, after losing a number of sheep the first winter, they learned that Nebraska hay was not nourishing enough without an added grain ration. This problem conquered, they built up, in the following years, the finest breeding flock of Merinos in the state.

Sometime in 1876, Peter went again to New York to meet and bring west some of their friends from Prussia, and this was a more than ordinarily pleasant duty, because among them was a very charming young lady whom he had met during the family's visit in Germany, and between them there was already a tacit understanding, which culminated in marriage the following year. Peter was mighty proud as he traveled across country with this new group of friends, for they represented what was probably the largest body of well-dressed, well-educated, and well-to-do immigrants that ever came to the West.

While Peter was running the sheep-ranch for his father, he was investing his share of the profits in adjoining land, paying $6-$12 an acre for it. He began the improvements on it with a small house and a barn; and moved to this farm with his wife, who, there, presented him with five children, one of whom, the firstborn, died in infancy. In the next few years, Peter continued to make improvements, erecting new sheep-sheds, a large horse-barn, and numerous other buildings; planting a great many trees, and a fine orchard. He also laid out

The 2,000-acre Jansen ranch located 3 miles east of Jansen, Nebraska and 18 miles west of Beatrice.

a beautiful front yard with an artificial lake. "Jansen's Ranch" eventually became the showplace of the country and attracted much attention and many visitors. In all, it consisted of more than two thousand acres. Seven families lived on it and worked for the owner, who built for each family a comfortable house and a good barn.

At first, besides raising sheep, Peter Jansen grew enormous crops of spring wheat, and got as high as $1.22 a bushel for it. When winter-wheat was introduced, he had the first field of it—about twenty acres—in Jefferson County. He also raised big crops of corn—50 to 60 bushels to the acre was not unusual, and one year his entire acreage averaged 63 bushels per acre.

In the '80's settlers came in very rapidly, and the open prairie was soon no longer available for the Jansen flocks. Consistent in his business ability and foresight, Peter Jansen changed his plan and commenced feeding western sheep for the market. Under his able direction this industry grew into great proportions. Soon he had feedyards in four different places, and in one season fed 30,000 head of sheep.

In the summer of 1886, the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad surveyed its line from St. Joseph via Beatrice to Fairbury and the West. The building of this line was a decided factor in the development of that section of the state. Peter Jansen took an active part in the preliminaries, and when a railroad town was established four miles west of the Jansen ranch, the railroad officials named it "Jansen."

The Mennonite church did not favor having its members take an active part in politics, but Peter Jansen reasoned that in the United States, a country which gave every indication of furnishing them a permanent freedom, conditions were different; and he soon formed the conclusion that the man who failed to do his part in maintaining good government was not a useful citizen. Accordingly, he took an active interest in politics, and threw the weight of his influence and organizing ability behind every movement which he considered to be for the betterment of his adopted country.

From the beginning he was frequently a delegate to the county and state conventions of the Republican party, and as early as 1884 was elected an alternate delegate to the National Republican Convention at which James G. Blaine was nominated for President. He was one of the four delegates-at-large to the St. Louis convention which nominated William McKinley. Yet he was

Peter Jansen, after whom Jansen, Nebraska was named. Taken about 1915.

never an office seeker, since he felt and stated that political influence disappears as soon as one seeks office for his own gain. However, in 1880, his neighbors elected him justice of the peace, and subsequently he was twice elected to the state legislature, once as a representative and again as a senator. He was offered the nomination for governor but refused it on the grounds that such an office might place him in a position where he would be required to enforce the death penalty.

Nevertheless, his fellow citizens continued to seek his services in one way or another. In the year 1900, President McKinley appointed him one of the twelve United States Commissioners to the Paris World's Fair, and during the time he was away, he traveled extensively through the British Isles and Europe, visiting his old friends in Germany and South Russia.

During the early days when Nebraska was one of

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Main residence, barns, and sheep sheds on the Jansen ranch. Both views taken about 1915.

Goodwill Recreation Hall

BY ANDREW R. SHELLY

IN the spring of 1944, a young married man became concerned about the boys and girls roaming the streets or going to the movies on Saturday afternoons. Many had been speaking about the Saturday afternoon problem, but he felt that instead of merely speaking about it, something ought to be done. With the help of sympathetic friends, he gathered boys and girls about him on Saturday afternoons, went on hikes, and played games with them. It soon became apparent that a meeting place would be desirable. The small auditorium of the House of Friendship, the city mission, was first used; but because of the size and type of building it was inadequate.

In October, a more ideal building was located on King Street in the heart of Kitchener. On the third floor of a large hardware concern, tables were set up and power machinery for woodworking was secured.

The conviction gradually grew that this hall should be used for young people's activities. With the hearty endorsement of the Mennonite churches and young people from other churches, the hall was opened in January, 1945, beginning in a small way to provide various informal games and occasional features.

The movement experienced the usual growing pains of new ventures. It was not an easy task to secure a smoothly running organization and the necessary leadership. It seemed that for the sake of facilitating the coordination of activities a responsible board of directors would have to be in charge. The present board of directors includes representatives from every Mennonite church in Kitchener and Waterloo. The conferences represented are the Ontario Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Brethren in Christ, and the General Conference.

This Goodwill Hall venture, beginning purely as a faith movement, now has a financial structure of a general four-fold nature: donations from churches, donations from individuals, income from canteen and young people's contributions, and grants from the Federated Charities of Kitchener. After the city authorities and leaders had given their commendations, the recreational council was approached. They also endorsed the work heartily.

An average of seventy-seven boys and girls attended the Goodwill Hall during March of this year. During a year's time approximately three hundred different boys and girls, coming from twenty-nine different churches and some with no church home, made use of the hall. From sixty to seventy is considered capacity for general group activity.

The afternoon activities group themselves into three areas: handwork, games, and devotional program. Boys do woodwork. The director, using a modern power saw, prepares the wood for the boys. They, in turn, sand the wood, cut it into shape, and fashion such things as bird houses, magazine racks, and small chairs. The girls engage in leather, felt, and sewing crafts. A varied program of activities keeps the interest high. A wide variety of simple games—checkers, chinese checkers, crochinole, hockey boards, baseball boards—are always available.

With the recreational program, a short devotional service is always held. At about four in the afternoon, the entire group gathers for songs and object lessons. During the current season, the students of the Emmanuel Bible School, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Institution in Kitchener, have been conducting the services as part of their practical work.

The development of an attractive and meaningful evening program schedule was a long and difficult task. It was discovered that a well-planned program with proper leadership was necessary. After extensive experimentation and study, a workable basic pattern was established consisting of three periods in the evening's program:

All join in a lusty session of singing.

Having a good time on a Christian level.

An exciting game of ping-pong.

The canteen—always a popular spot.

First, the informal period during which the group gathers and engages in visiting and various types of informal games of which ping-pong and chess have proved the most popular. The second part of the evening's program is given over to special features, arranged on a monthly basis with each leader being responsible for one Saturday evening per month. During the first and third periods of the evening, the piano is available, and frequently informal groups gather to sing.

The feature on the first Saturday of each month is known as "game night." A resourceful Mennonite school teacher has charge of this interesting feature and always furnishes a wide variety of group games. Sometimes it may be an indoor trackmeet, and at other times the evening may be devoted to circle games.

On the second Saturday of the month, the feature is "quiz night," a very popular and instructive feature in charge of another school teacher. Interest is always high on this night, as the type of quiz varies from month to month.

Sound motion pictures of an hour or hour-and-a-half in length are the feature for the third Saturday of the month.

The feature on the fourth Saturday is music appreciation. A Mennonite particularly interested in good music has charge of this feature. He comments briefly about some of the great masterpieces and then in turn plays them on the electric record player.

The values of a venture of this kind are legion. Perhaps the greatest of these cannot be observed in such a way as to put them into words, but the following should be mentioned.

Positive approach to the problem of recreation.—Too long churches have merely been pointing at danger spots in commercialized amusements. Goodwill Hall was born out of a deep conviction that this is not sufficient; one cannot merely say 'don't' to young people; they want something to 'do.'

Keeps children off the streets.—During the afternoon's activities the Hall is filled far beyond normal capacity. Formerly the children would have been at the Saturday afternoon movie; Goodwill Hall was in a large measure the answer to that problem.

Place to meet friends.—The problem of proper comrades, friends, and groups is acute. The Hall is a place for Christian young people to meet other Christian young people.

Promotes Mennonite unity and understanding.—It is significant that six different Mennonite groups are working together harmoniously on the project.

Opportunity for service and leadership.—Through these various activities the young people as well as laymen and ministers are finding opportunities for service and leadership.

God grant us vision that we may ever be true to our children and young people!

Peter Jansen

(Continued from page 45)

the prominent sheep-raising and wool-producing states, Peter Jansen served as the first president of the Nebraska Wool Growers Association and was re-elected several times.

Shortly before the war, Mr. Jansen sold his ranch for an average price of $100 an acre, and moved to Beatrice, where he had for some time owned several lots of ground.

Interested in securing a good hospital for Beatrice, Peter Jansen gave one of his plots to the Mennonite Church for the building of the Deaconess Hospital and also contributed heavily to the building fund.

During his remaining years, he continued to serve his people and community in every way that opened before him. He never spared himself in a worthy cause, or failed to help a friend in need. After a lingering illness, he passed away, at his home in Beatrice, June 6, 1923.

His passing is well described in the poignant phrase he once used in speaking of a friend, "God's finger touched him and he slept."

Mennonites in Fiction

(Continued from page 38.)

see the sun set behind the "rim of the Rocky Mountains." For a number of years I lived about a mile west of that village, but I never did my week-end shopping in Atchison nor feast my eyes from there on the snow-covered rim of the Rockies.

Most of the incidents of the story are plausible, but some are reminiscent of the ecstatic ebullience of the Expressionists and tax the reader's credulity. The author reports that when the locusts settled on Gnadenau, the villagers "fought them with their hands; and when their hands grew weary with their feet; and when their feet grew weary with their teeth; and when their teeth broke, they rolled their own bodies over the fields." (A comma after each "weary" would eliminate the ambiguity of that sentence.) If tall stories are to be told, I prefer those that were formerly current in that region. There was one about our neighbor leaving his fork standing in the field when he went to the house for lunch. Upon his return he found only the tines sticking in the ground.

An absolute high in perception is reached when "everything was so still that they could hear the faint sucking sound the earth made as it absorbed the dew." If, as the blurb reports, Schrag "knows the soil by instinct," why does he have one of his characters ask another: "Do you think eighteen-inch furrows deep enough?"

His treatment of the character traits of the Mennonites is fairly reasonable and sympathetic. He pictures them as being co-operative and considerate, industrious and economical. They share willingly with each other and even with outsiders in case of need. Their attitude is well stated by their leader, Martin Miller:

> The way of the Mennonites is straight and narrow, and it has been marked out by God. One behind the other, we have been following it for generations, each in the footsteps of his father. It is a long and weary way, but the ground under our feet is firm and reliable; and the words of the Scriptures mark out our direction.

Physically the Mennonites do not fare quite so well at his hands; he makes them absurdly uniform. In actual life not all of them have broad feet and straight lips. According to the author:

> It was remarkable how much alike all these Mennonites were. They were like pebbles that have rolled down a stream from source to mouth; at the end of their thousand-year journey they are almost indistinguishable, the one from the other. All cracks and wrinkles have vanished, all individual character has been worn off. The soft outer layers have washed away and only the hard inner core remains.

In a funeral procession this likeness is further exaggerated.

> They walked with their square heads lowered, looking neither to right nor to left. They were round-shouldered; their arms were crooked outward and their trousers baggy. Their tread was heavy and deliberate, and their hand swung lightly back and forth as they moved. Two by two they walked, and each pair was like the other; and the smell of their sweat-stained clothes was all the same. And the women were like the men. Except that they wore skirts; that each had breasts and a broad pelvis, a lighter complexion and freckles, a smaller head and narrower shoulder. The difference lay only in their sex.

Style and diction are reasonably smooth and felicitous; occasional awkwardnesses may be the result of translation. The German pronoun "man" presents an insoluble problem. The translation results in such awkward sentences as "When one went to town for boughten [?] things, one did not think of hopper dosers or poisons; one defended oneself as one's parents and grandparents had done."

Whatever the diction of the German text may be, certainly the English version would be greatly improved by eliminating the vulgar and profane terms, many of which are so coarse that they practically never appear in print, not even in *Forever Amber*. In various instances the reader might also omit whole paragraphs that deal with irrelevant naturalistic detail detracting from supposedly tense situations.

The fundamental idea portrayed in the story is the attachment of the human being to the soil, which reminds one more of *Blut und Boden* than of the tenets of Mennonite faith. The great mission of the Mormon preacher, Jeremiah Kentrup, consists in keeping settlers from deserting their land although their crops are ruined by the locusts. The idea may be a good one, but it is not sufficiently sublime to elevate Kentrup to the level of the prophets, nor does it justify picturing him as assuming the role of Jesus, surrounded by the children of Gnadenau. One might be tempted to label that as unadulterated *Schwulst*.

Since the novel starts with seven groups and then continues to shift from one to the other before the reader can become interested in any of the characters, the book offers rather tedious reading.

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Using "Mennonite Life" in Study and Discussion Groups

"Where can I get interesting and informative material for presentation and discussion in our Young People's Group, our Adult Study Class, or our Church History class in Bible School?" No doubt, you have heard this question and have perhaps asked it yourself. Or again you may have asked: "Where can I get information on the Amish, the Hutterites, Mennonites in Holland, or Mennonites in Canada?" With the use of the index we are presenting in this issue the usefulness of *Mennonite Life* will be greatly enhanced. As an example of how various topics may be developed, we present just a few topics with references to articles in *Mennonite Life*. Most of these references are to complete articles only. The index will provide other references to these and many other topics.

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Words to Young Christians

WE DARE not be totally indifferent toward inherited and historically developed formulas of church life. It becomes a plain duty to preserve and to honor the church in its visible manifestations—its doctrines, organization, and ritual. Familiarize yourself, therefore, with the general and peculiar tenets of our church and with their expressions in the several periods of its history. The Mennonites emphasize the training in these matters not only on the part of their intellectual leaders, but of the rank and file as well. Try to appreciate your church organization historically.

—C. H. Wedel, in *Words to Young Christians*